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REMBRANDT

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W. Heinemann



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REMBRANDT

His Life, his Work, and his Time

BY

ÉMILE MICHEL

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE

FROM THE FRENCH BY

FLORENCE SIMMONDS

EDITED BY

FREDERICK WEDMORE

*With Sixty-seven Full-page Plates
And Two Hundred and Fifty Text Illustrations*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.



LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

NEW YORK : CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

MDCCCXCIV





VIEW OF A TOWN.

Pen drawing heightened with wash. (Berlin Print Room.)

EDITOR'S PREFACE



PORTRAIT—supposed to be either TITUS or the PRINCE OF ORANGE.

1641 (B. 310).

I HAD better point out at once such changes as it has been thought desirable to make in placing before the English-reading public Monsieur Michel's comprehensive book on that pictorial artist whom all schools of criticism unite to honour. Those changes will be found to consist almost entirely in that which concerns the illustration, for in regard to the literary work the Editor's duty to the public and to the writer was mainly to present Monsieur Michel's substance and style in the best English at the command of a translator

of taste, and the English of Miss Simmonds, and knowledge generally, as I think, excellent in itself, has surely done as little violence as possible to the French of the Frenchman. In aiming to be correct, Miss Simmonds has not lost sight of the necessity of being readable.

I have ventured to correct here and there a few errors of fact—misprints, in all probability, in the French edition—and these small corrections have been greatly supplemented—dare I say completed?—by the list of corrections which Monsieur Michel himself has supplied for our present issue, and which are now embodied in it. I have also, with now and again the kind assistance of owners of important Rembrandts and such serious students of the Master's work as Mr. Humphry Ward, Mr. Claude Phillips, Mr. Walter Armstrong (the Director of the Irish National Gallery), and Mr. J. M. Gray (the Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery), made certain corrections and additions in that Appendix of Monsieur Michel's which deals with the whereabouts of great Rembrandt pictures in the United Kingdom.

Again, in dealing with the etchings—things which the collector of every land must love; things in which, as I conceive it, the art of Rembrandt found after all its amplest and most exquisite expression—due reference has been made to the Catalogue of Wilson, which Monsieur Michel had omitted to cite. Wilson's Catalogue, though comparatively elementary, and in this respect a contrast to the elaborate undertakings of later times (it was published in 1836), has never been wholly superseded. It enjoys the advantages—profits by the convenience—of its simplicity. Charles Blanc's is the Catalogue employed most habitually in France. Later in date, and more advanced and searching perhaps in its analysis of "states," it comes often usefully to Wilson's aid. I should have liked, but that it might have clogged our pages almost unduly, to have cited it, and also the latest and greatest of these *Catalogues raisonnés*—that of Monsieur Dutuit, published so luxuriously in illustration and elucidation of his own wonderful cabinet of Rembrandt's prints. The collector at all events cannot afford to disregard that, any more than the Charles Blanc; but its inevitably expensive form may continue to forbid its popular use. This tribute to it was due. While adding in the Catalogue proper—not throughout the course of the volume—the references to Wilson, I might personally have felt it permissible, and even wise, to discard the reference to Bartsch which Monsieur Michel has maintained. For the English student of Rembrandt—especially for the student

of "states"—Bartsch is scarcely up to date. Often a convenient, sometimes the only handy source of knowledge on the engraving of many older masters, that excellent Eighteenth Century Viennese connoisseur has, as an authority on Rembrandt, been in a measure superseded. But we have thought it politic to be conservative, and have retained the old while introducing much of the more recent.

And now for the illustrations themselves. Almost directly the publisher consulted me about the book I told him that the French edition, along with all that it contained of value and of charm, seemed to me actually burdened by the presence of a few photogravures and a few coloured reproductions of drawings which he would do well to dispense with. What they precisely were need not here be said. A comparison of the two editions it is open to any one to make. But while proposing to leave out these things, I wanted the publisher to make good certain omissions in Monsieur Michel's list of illustrations, and asked him to include, either as photogravures or illustrations in the text, some further English Rembrandts of note and of high merit. He assented; and thus it is that in the present edition we are enabled—thanks too to their owners' graciousness—to have reproductions of Lord Ilchester's noble picture, *Rembrandt in a Yellow Gaberdine*, of the Glasgow Corporation's picture of a *Man in Armour*, of the *Hendrickje Stoffels* of the Scottish National Gallery, and of Mr. Samuel Joseph's *Saskia*, while, as a minor matter, Mr. Spielmann's offer of a Rembrandt pen-and-ink drawing enables us to add one more to the series of Rembrandt's artistic dealings with the story of Tobit.

Nor does the enumeration of these additions quite end the tale of changes. In the French issue the reproductions of certain of the etchings were very unsatisfactory. A fresh block has been made of the *Lutma*, which was so "woolly" in the French publication. I hope the new one is better. Mr. Gray lent us the etching. Again, a fresh block has been made (because with work of its extreme delicacy the scale formerly adopted was quite insufficient) of that delightful early etching of Rembrandt's mother which Mr. Hamerton has so fittingly eulogised—it appears on the first page—the small reproduction of the Third State of the *Clément de Jonghe* has been supplemented by a reproduction of the First State, which I

happen to possess; we give also, for the first time, a block from the wonderful boy-portrait which was once supposed to be Titus and then supposed to be a little Prince of Orange (No. 311 in Wilson's Catalogue), and, finally, I invited the publisher to include the reproduction of a plate of sketches on the copper, which is of great rarity (Wilson, No. 364), and of which only a part of the interest is that it does undoubtedly contain one of Rembrandt's portraits of himself—a portrait so remarkable for vigour, assurance, and freedom, that I hardly wonder at the opinion which was entertained of this print, in the full ripeness of his judgment, by that admirable connoisseur, Monsieur Dutuit, who goes so far as to say, in his great Catalogue, that it is one of the very best of Rembrandt's pieces.

So much for the subtractions and additions in the matter of illustration. There remains but a final word.

No student who has ever acquired a vivid interest in Rembrandt's life and work can expect to agree absolutely in all the conclusions of another—be that other never so learned—be he Monsieur Michel himself. While acquiescing generally in Monsieur Michel's views—in the views of a critic so sound and careful—even an Editor may feel, here and there, a disposition to differ. But whatever latitude of quarrel one might have left one's self as a writer, as an Editor has been sternly curtailed. I have for the most part been reticent. Least of all could it have been fitting that I should, in this place, have said a word bearing in any direction on certain ancient, and well-known, and more or less personal disputes in which it has never been my desire to have a part. While doing my best to ensure the adequate presentation of Monsieur Michel's labours, and the comprehensive illustration of Rembrandt's consummate art, I have, speaking generally, sought to efface myself. Just once and again, on minor matters of fact or of opinion, I have ventured a remark in a foot-note—a foot-note printed in italics, that it may be abundantly clear that I alone, and not Monsieur Michel, must be accounted responsible for the little that is there said.

FREDERICK WEDMORE.

LONDON, *October*, 1893.



A VILLAGE, WITH A CANAL AND A VESSEL UNDER SAIL.

About 1645 (B. 228).

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION



REMBRANDT IN A FLAT CAP.

About 1638 (B. 26).

THE short monograph on Rembrandt which I contributed to the *Artistes Célèbres* series¹ in 1885 was the germ of this more extensive study. The subject had long attracted me. Travels in Germany, frequent visits to Holland, and familiarity with his etched work, all tended to increase my admiration for the master. My researches in connection with the earlier monograph made me aware of many gaps in

my knowledge of his life and art; they also fired me with the desire for a closer acquaintance.

The general plan of this work lay ready to my hand. It was marked out by my earlier essay, and I have naturally adhered to the chronological method there adopted. Rembrandt's life was so wholly given to his art that the two cannot be divorced in narrative;

¹ *Librairie de l'Art.*

their unity is complete, the one illuminating the other. It was his almost invariable custom to carefully note the dates of his creations. Perhaps no artist has shown a like precision in such matters; none was so often his own model; none has left such innumerable studies of father, mother, wife, and all who were dear to him. Though much has been written about his life, its actual facts were little known till the last few years. His taste for solitude, and great independence of character, combined to hold him aloof from the foremost men of his day. The brief popularity he enjoyed on first settling in Amsterdam was succeeded by the poverty and neglect in which he died. Hence the information to be gleaned from his contemporaries is very scanty. For our knowledge of his early years we are mainly indebted to a bare page in the *Description of Leyden* by J. Orlers, Burgomaster of the city, published in 1641, when the young artist was at the height of his fame, and to Sandrart's slightly more explicit account. The latter narrative has a double interest. Widely as they differed both in taste and aim, Sandrart too was a painter, and had no doubt a personal acquaintance with his brilliant *confrère*. Samuel van Hoogstraten's disappointing reticence as to the details of his master's career was supplemented to some extent by Houbraken. But Houbraken's facts are interwoven with a mass of those suspicious anecdotes which adorn the plain tale of so many artistic biographies. Campo-Weyermann, Dargenville, Descamps, and others added further embellishments, boldly piling fable on fable for the amusement of their readers, till legend gradually ousted truth. The spendthrift who could never learn the value of money, and scattered it like some young noble, was, according to them, a miser; that lofty spirit, the author of so many fine creations, was, we are told, the boon companion of vulgarity and degradation. His marriage with a fair peasant of Ransdorp, his pretended death, his journey to Venice, his threats that he would forsake his native land if not treated with

greater respect—threats he actually carried out by settling at Hull or Yarmouth, say some, in Sweden, say others, and there ending his days—all these are among the inventions current till the middle of the present century.

To Mr. Eduard Kolloff, a scholar whose claims have been somewhat overlooked of late, the inauguration of a more exact and learned system of criticism is due. His study on Rembrandt is insufficiently known, mainly, no doubt, by reason of its appearance in a very unlikely publication.¹ It is marked, however, by a penetration and precision to which Bürger and Vosmaer have hardly done justice commensurate with the advantage they reaped therefrom.

With the works of these two writers, who relied chiefly on Kolloff, a new era began in Rembrandt literature, an era inaugurated by the fruitful researches of Messrs. Scheltema, R. Elzevier, Eckhoff and Van der Willigen. Bürger propagated their discoveries far and wide, stimulating the zeal of the pioneers, and, by his fervid enthusiasm, imparting to his readers something of that passionate, almost exclusive admiration, with which he had come to regard the master.² But the task Bürger had set himself to accomplish was destined to be carried out by a Dutchman, and Vosmaer showed himself equal to the lofty work his patriotism had suggested, by the pious care he brought to bear upon it, and by his profound study of his subject in all its ramifications. To his skilful grouping of facts already ascertained, he added the sum of his own discoveries.³ His perfect knowledge of Dutch literature enabled him to paint the artist among his actual surroundings, and to show how far Rembrandt had been inspired by these, how far by the originality of his genius.

¹ *Rembrandt's Leben und Werke*, published in Fr. von Raumer's *Historisches Taschenbuch*, Leipzig, 1854, p. 401 *et seq.*

² *Les Musées de Hollande*, by W. Bürger. 3 vols. 12mo. Paris, 1858-60.

³ *Rembrandt; his Life and Works*, by Vosmaer. The first edition appeared in 1868; the second, much enlarged and revised, in 1877.

Thenceforward the master's triumph was assured. Worshipers, fervent, if few, he had always commanded; but the public has been gradually won over. Increasing facilities of intercourse have opened up the museums and private galleries which possess his works; engravings and photographs of his pictures, and facsimiles of his drawings have familiarised us with the force and fecundity of his wonderful genius. Far from satiating the appetite of inquiry, these various forms of research have stimulated the desire for more perfect knowledge. Among writers of the last ten years who have specially devoted themselves to the quest, Messrs. W. Bode and A. Bredius are *facile principes*.

The limitations of Vosmaer are very evident. He had seen but a portion of the master's pictures, and his æsthetic perception was by no means equal to his erudition. Dr. Bode took up his work, and corrected it at many points by the light of his own purer and more experienced taste. In his constant travels throughout Europe, he has made himself acquainted with the whole field of Rembrandt's labours, and is perhaps better qualified to catalogue his works than any living writer. He was the first to direct attention to the works of Rembrandt's adolescence; he has restored to him, as their true author, a series of unknown works, and his attributions, though contested at first, are now universally accepted. A notice the published in he *Graphischen Künste* was expanded into the remarkable article on Rembrandt in his *Studies for a History of Art in Holland*,¹ a striking analysis of the master's artistic career.

A fresh impetus was simultaneously given to documentary research by the inauguration of the periodical known as *Oud-Holland*,² under the editorship of the well-known scholars, Messrs. Bredius and De Roever. A fund of priceless information on matters connected with

¹ *Studien zur Geschichte der holländischen Malerei*. Brunswick, 1883. 1 vol. 8vo.

² Amsterdam: Binger Brothers. The publication is now in its tenth year.

art history was discovered by the editors in Dutch archives, and most ably annotated. Thanks to their researches, the cruxes of Rembrandt's biography have been explained, and the secrets of his mysterious existence brought to light. In grateful recognition of all I owe to their friendly help, I here tender my thanks to Messrs. Bredius and De Roever. If I have been enabled to supply the deficiencies of Vosmaer, and to trace more clearly than he has done the close union between Rembrandt's life and art, my success is due to them. To their zeal and to their discoveries I owe the information which must give a certain value to my book.

While busied in the arrangement and collation of my materials, I have been careful to neglect no opportunity of study at first hand. Before starting on a pilgrimage through Europe to see such of the master's works as were unknown to me, and to re-examine such as were familiar, I made every effort to prepare myself for the problems to be encountered. Two successive visits to England, and expeditions to Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and North Germany enabled me to review all the museums I had already visited. Rembrandt's name is a talisman among his devotees, and the sort of freemasonry it establishes between them opened all doors to me. The directors of public galleries everywhere received me with the utmost cordiality. Their sympathy proved of great assistance to me in my work; they imparted their own stores of information, opened their archives for my inspection, and frequently gained access for me to private collections, where they themselves were my guides.

Their good offices have not ceased with my travels. Thanks to the friendly relations thus established, I gained correspondents in all quarters, with whom I could exchange ideas, who have been prompt to answer my questions, and even to forestall them by the liberal communication of facts likely to be of interest to me. Among those to whose kindness or valuable help I am most deeply indebted are: Messrs. Eisenmann and Habich of Cassel; Mr. Riegel of Brunswick; Messrs.

W. de Seidlitz, K. Woermann and C. Hofstede de Groot of Dresden ; Dr. R. Gaul, Editor of the *Graphischen Künste* of Vienna ; Dr. Bode and Dr. Lippmann of Berlin ; Mr. A. Somoff of St. Petersburg ; Messrs. G. Upmark and G. Goethe of Stockholm ; Mr. Emil Bloch of Copenhagen ; Dr. Schlie of Schwerin ; Mr. Lichtwark of Hamburg ; Mr. Obreen, of Amsterdam ; Messrs. P. Haverkorn van Rysewyk and Moes of Rotterdam ; Dr. J. Worp of Gröningen, and Mr. Scholten, Director of the Teyler Museum at Haarlem. For the topography of places connected with Rembrandt, I had the best of all guides in Mr. Ch. Dozy of Leyden, and Mr. de Roever of Amsterdam. To their kindness I owe very substantial help.

Desiring to turn such precious facilities to the best possible account, I lived for several years with Rembrandt, surrounded by reproductions of his pictures, drawings and etchings, and by documents bearing on his history, my mind all the while intently fixed on the facts of his life, and the achievements of his genius. In my ceaseless efforts to grasp the logic of this synchronism of works and events, I learnt the realities of his career. The procession of dates and facts took on a new significance ; I saw the heterogeneous threads of information weave themselves gradually into the fabric of a life—the life of Rembrandt, with its small events and large passions, its stormy aspirations, its glorious masterpieces, marking the successive epochs of troubled existence.

None can feel more deeply than I the difficulties of such a task. But happily the master himself collaborates with me to make himself more widely known. It has been my good fortune to secure Rembrandt's own services as illustrator of the volume wherein I propose to chronicle his history and analyse his genius. The great advance in photography and heliogravure of late years has made it possible to offer the public such a transcript of Rembrandt's works as is contained in this volume.

The drawings and etchings are reproduced by the firm of Krakow.

A few of the most famous and important, the place of which in this work had been determined from its inception, are printed separately. Other examples have been chosen partly as characteristic specimens of the master, partly as lending themselves readily to successful reproduction. In referring to the etchings, we have followed Bartsch's classification, not only as that to which most authorities are reverting,¹ but as offering an uniform method of notation for the works of Rembrandt and those of his pupils or imitators, whose plates Bartsch has also described and catalogued.²

The difficulties of reproduction were, of course, infinitely greater with the pictures. Photography is not well adapted to the rendering of those brown and golden tones which predominate in Rembrandt's works. It was necessary to choose proofs combining clearness in the shadows with exactness in the suggestion of values. Some of the examples were borrowed from the collection of Messrs. Braun and Co. Mr. Hanfstaengl of Munich also allowed the free use of all his Rembrandt reproductions. I am indebted to Mr. Baer of Rotterdam for the fragment of the *Pacification of Holland*, the *grisaille* of the Boymans Museum, and to Mr. Hoffmann, Director of the Darmstadt Museum, for a photograph of the *Flagellation* in his gallery, which is now published for the first time. The courtesy of Lord Warwick, of Count Orloff Davidoff, and of Messrs. Ed. André, Haro, and R. Kann, has further enabled me to reproduce other pictures never before published. Finally M. Sedelmeyer, to whom I here make most grateful acknowledgment, furnished me with photographs of several among the numerous works of Rembrandt which have been in his possession from time to time.

The plates engraved from these photographs were executed by M. Dujardin. Copies of some old engravings of public buildings

¹ See a paragraph in my *Preface*.—F. W.

² The numerous etchings here reproduced are distinguished by a B. (signifying Bartsch), followed by the number of each in his catalogue.

in Leyden and Amsterdam, several picturesque views of the two towns, and facsimiles of signatures successively used by Rembrandt, complete the list of illustrations in this volume, which the publishers have striven to make worthy of that great master to whom it is dedicated.



THE SLEEPING CHILD.
(Sir Frederick Leighton's Collection.)

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PEN DRAWING.
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)

CHAPTER I.

LEYDEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—THE BIRTH OF REMBRANDT—HIS FAMILY—HIS STUDIES AND AMUSEMENTS—THE UNIVERSITY OF LEYDEN—EDUCATION AND MANNERS OF THE PERIOD—WORKS OF ART IN THE TOWN-HALL—PRECOCITY OF REMBRANDT'S GENIUS—HIS MASTERS, J. VAN SWANENBURCH AT LEYDEN, AND P. LASTMAN AT AMSTERDAM—HIS RETURN TO LEYDEN.



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.
1628 (B. 354).

LEYDEN had gradually recovered strength after the ordeal of that double siege (1573—1574) in which she had successfully defied the Spaniard. By the beginning of the seventeenth century few visible tokens remained of the ruin and desolation wrought by the war of independence. The ancient city, clustering about her venerable Burg, and girdled by smiling villages, expanded freely along the two arms of the Rhine, which, uniting

here, lose themselves a little farther in the sandy *dunes*. With the development of her commerce, she had regained something of her earlier splendour. For generations the residence of the Counts of Holland, Leyden was, and is to this day, the seat of the *Rynland*, a species of syndicate, formed for the control and regulation of the waters, in the heart of the land most exposed

to their ravages. Her cathedral church, dedicated to St. Peter, a vast five-aisled basilica of the early fourteenth century, had escaped the destruction shared by many buildings, the ornaments of Leyden before the war. The Town-hall, which had been burnt down several times, had just been rebuilt from the plans of the skilful artist Lieven de Key, a Flemish emigrant who had been cordially received at Haarlem, where his talents gained him the post of city architect.

Distinguished for her charities, even in a country where charity is exercised in so liberal and intelligent a spirit, Leyden boasted, in addition to the municipal orphanage, rebuilt in 1607 near the Church of St. Pancras, a large number of homes for the orphaned, the aged, and the infirm. These asylums were superintended and maintained by members of the patrician families who had founded them. The most perfect order and cleanliness reigned throughout; the walls enclosed gardens gay with flowers; and the poor inmates enjoyed at least a semblance of family life and social ease.

Many of the municipal bodies, and military and civic guilds, had taken up their quarters in the religious buildings—chapels or cloisters—depopulated by the Reformation. Thus the Chapel of the Hospital of St. James had become the Cloth Hall, where were held the meetings of the Drapers' Guild, the most important of the local industries. The homes of citizens rose on every side—in the streets, and on the quays of the Breedstraat, the Oude-Singel, the Rapenburg and the Langeburg—some retaining the features of the old national style—others inspired by the art of the Renaissance, which was beginning to find favour. The rapid growth of the city had resulted in the extension of its boundaries towards the east. The original *enceinte*, notwithstanding its enlargement in the thirteenth, and again in the fourteenth century, had become obsolete, and a series of new defensive works had been constructed. A population at once warlike and lettered animated the wide streets, now silent and deserted. Artisans, petty traders, drapers, scholars, and men of science, had stood shoulder to shoulder in days past, each outvying the other in heroism to resist the common foe. Henceforth, the memory of fatigues and dangers shared together formed a bond of union between

class and class; a new spirit was working within them; and the natural energy of the people, stimulated by the great events in which they had taken part, developed freely. It was a time of expansion and noble activity such as is seldom recorded in human history.

Tradition has it, that when William of Orange desired to recognise the great services of Leyden to the national cause by temporary exemption from taxation, the inhabitants craved, instead of the proffered boon, the gift of an University. This University was created by a charter of February 9, 1575, and liberally endowed. Its original domicile was the ancient cloister of St. Barbara. It was afterwards removed to the Jacobin Chapel, where it remains. The most distinguished scholars of the age, Justus Lipsius, Scaliger, Vossius, Saumaise, Daniel Heinsius, Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde and many others, were successively among its professors. There Arminius and Gomarus taught theology, and the former, by word and writings, waged war, unceasing and successful, against superstitions and prejudices that remained dominant throughout the rest of Europe. With the aid of some of his colleagues he wiped out for ever from the annals of his country the penal laws against sorcerers, and the judicial persecution of the Jews, which continued to disgrace the most civilised nations of Europe. Important works of every kind issued from the printing-presses of Leyden, proclaiming far and wide the fertility of an intellectual centre which, in glorious rivalry with Plantin of Antwerp, produced the classic editions of the Elzevirs, so highly prized by later bibliophiles. The care bestowed on the training of youth attracted students from all parts of the country, and Leyden became a nursery of talent, and a home of patriotism—the throbbing heart, so to speak, of corporate Holland.

On this favoured spot Rembrandt was born, July 15, 1606. The date 1606, an extremely probable one, is not absolutely above suspicion. Though universally accepted by earlier students, it was rejected by Vosmaer, after Dr. Scheltema's discovery of the following entry, under the date July 10, 1634, in the marriage registers of Amsterdam: "Rembrandt Harmensz of Leyden, aged

26." According to this, his birth-year was 1608. On the other hand, an impression in the second state, of an etching in the British Museum, the subject a portrait of Rembrandt by himself, bears the inscription, believed to be by his own hand: *æt. 24, anno 1631*, which would give 1607 for the date of birth. The figure 24 has, however, been challenged, and Charles Blanc read it 25. But even

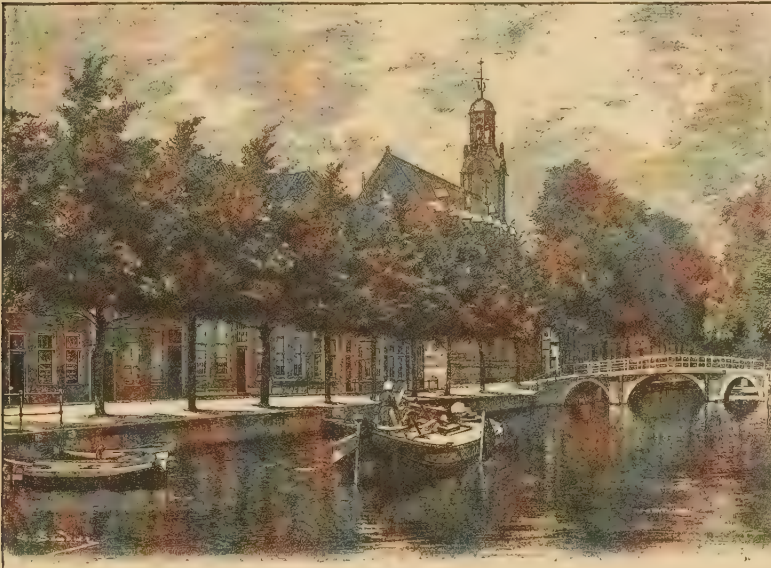


MUNICIPAL ORPHANAGE AND CHURCH OF ST. PANCRAS AT LEYDEN.
(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

if we admit the authenticity of the inscription, the question still presents obvious difficulties. It is hardly to be wondered at that Dr. Bredius upholds the old date, 1606, in spite of Vosmaer's arguments. After careful examination, we also accept it, as resting on fuller and more crucial evidence than any other; and primarily, as supported by the testimony of all writers, contemporary with Rembrandt or flourishing shortly after his death, who give any account of him. The first among these is the Burgomaster Orlers, who, in his *Description of Leyden*, pub-

¹ Houbraken writes June instead of July—doubtless an error of transcription: *Juni* for *Juli*.

than to elucidate the matter. One is the enregistration of Rembrandt, aged fourteen, as a student at the Faculty of Letters at Leyden in 1620. The date 1606 is hereby confirmed. But the other document, the *procès-verbal* of a committee of experts, among whom was Rembrandt, convened September 16, 1653, to decide upon the authenticity of a picture by Paul Brill, speaks of him as "about forty-six years old." If we accept this statement literally, we must conclude that he was born in 1607. Certainty is out of the question in view of such a conflict of evidence. And



LEYDEN UNIVERSITY, FROM RAPENBURG.
(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

having laid the various arguments before our readers, we propose to adopt, with all necessary reservations, the original date 1606, as that accepted by the most competent critics, Messrs. Bode, Eisenmann, and Karl Woermann.

Rembrandt was fifth among the six children of the miller Harmen Gerritsz, born in 1568 or 1569, and married on October 8, 1589, to Neeltge Willemsdochter, the daughter of a Leyden baker, who had migrated from Zuitbroeck. Both were members of the lower middle class, and in comfortable circumstances, for, besides the

family-dwelling at Leyden, near the junction of the two branches of the Rhine, Harmen owned the greater part of a windmill almost opposite, on the Pelican quay, close to the White Gate.¹ Several other houses, together with some gardens beyond the town, were his property, and figure in his will with plate, jewels, and linen of some value.

Harmen had gained the respect of his fellow-citizens, and in 1605 he was appointed head of a section in the Pelican quarter. He seems to have acquitted himself honourably in this office, for in 1620 he was re-elected. He was a man of education, to judge by the firmness of his handwriting as displayed in his signature to the will above-mentioned, which he deposited with the notary W. van Oudevliet, on March 1, 1600. He, and his eldest son after him, signed themselves, van Ryn, (of the Rhine), and following their example, Rembrandt added this designation to his monogram on many of his youthful works. In final proof of the family prosperity, we may mention their ownership of a burial-place in the Church of St. Peter, near the pulpit.²

No record of Rembrandt's early youth has come down to us. But we may be sure that his religious instruction was the object of his mother's special care, and that she strove to instil into her son the faith and moral principles that formed her own rule of life. Among the many portraits of her painted or etched by Rembrandt, the greater number represent her either with the Bible in her hand, or close beside her.³ The passages she read, the stories she recounted to him from her favourite book, made a deep and vivid impression on the child, and in later life he sought subjects for his works mainly in the sacred writings. Calligraphy in those days was, with the elements of grammar, looked upon as a very important branch of education. It was esteemed an art, and its professors ranked little below painters in the Holland of that period. The success won by the works of Boissens, Van de Velde and Coppenol, and the rapid sale of numerous editions, sufficiently attest this. Some

¹ This mill, in which malt was ground for beer, doubtless gave rise to the long accepted legend of Rembrandt's birth in a mill near Leyden.

² *Oud-Holland*, V. p. 11.

³ *Hardly the etched portraits—may I venture to say?—one or two of which represent her now with a worldly astuteness, now with a tolerant and not less worldly humour.—F. W.*

examples of their workmanship have been preserved. A wonderful lightness of hand and great accuracy are displayed in complicated flourishes and embellishments, and capitals adorned with all kinds of elaborate ornament, among which the more skilful loved to introduce figures and animals. The copies set for children were generally of an edifying description; verses, and moral quatrains, in the style of those popularised by the Sieur de Pibrac in France (1574) and speedily translated into all languages. These were transcribed and learnt by heart, together with selections from contemporary literature, in which, following the taste of the day, a realism often vulgar enough was blended with a curious affectation of ultra-refinement. That Rembrandt learnt to write his own language fairly correctly, we learn from the few letters by him still extant. Their orthography is not more faulty than that of many of his most distinguished contemporaries. His handwriting is very legible, and has even a certain elegance; and the clearness of some of his signatures does credit to his childish lessons.

With a view, however, to his further advancement, Rembrandt's parents had enrolled him among the students of Latin literature at the University.¹ The boy proved but an indifferent scholar. He seems to have had little taste for reading, to judge by the small number of books to be found in the inventory of his effects in later life. He was probably not a very frequent visitor to the famous library of the Faculty, the orderly interior of which is familiar to us from Swanenburch's engraving, where the books, duly classified and distributed, are shown to have been prudently fixed by iron rods to the desks at which the student stood to consult them. But the botanical garden by the side of the library, an addition of the year 1587, had doubtless greater attractions for him.² One of his inquiring mind must have found much to interest him among the strange plants growing either in the open air or in hot-houses, and

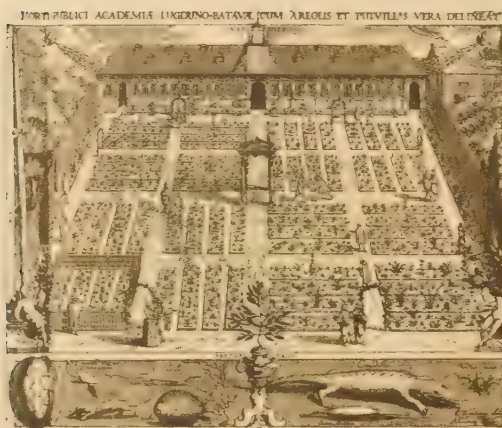
¹ As Mr. Haverkorn van Ryswyk has pointed out, it by no means follows that Rembrandt's parents intended him to go through the whole curriculum. Such enrolments were often made with a view to certain privileges or exemptions from taxation accorded to members of the University.

² Descartes, who praised the efficiency of the institution, acted as intermediary for the exchange of seeds between the Leyden establishment and the *Jardin du Roi*.

the curious beasts imported from Dutch settlements in the Indies—fish, turtles, and crocodiles, then rarely to be seen in Europe. Another plate, engraved by Swanenburch in 1610, gives a bird's-eye view of this establishment, the germ of those zoological gardens now a characteristic feature of Dutch towns.

Amidst all this provision for mental training, physical exercises were not neglected. In the series of plates illustrating the University of Leyden there is one with the legend: *Ludi publici*. It represents a sort of riding-school, where young men are occupied in fencing, riding, gymnastics, and the management of various weapons; an ex-

cellent preparation alike for civic life or for the defence of national freedom, should dangers once more threaten it. On the 3rd of October in every year, public festival was held in Leyden, to commemorate her heroic resistance, and the raising of the siege in 1574. On that day, to the sound of bells pealing their loudest, and the triumphant melodies of the carillon set up



BOTANICAL GARDENS OF LEYDEN UNIVERSITY.
(After an engraving by W. Swanenburch.)

in the tower of the Town-hall by H. van Nuys of Hasselt in 1578, the civic guard unfurled their banners, took arms, and marched in gala dress through the city. A solemn review was held; the corporation then proceeded to elect their chief magistrates; after which, officers and men met at a banquet in their *Doelen*, in the western quarter of the town, near the University. Foremost among the spectators on their route, no doubt, was the future painter of the *Night Watch*, with his ruddy face, his long dishevelled hair, his piercing eyes, and alert expression. Nor was the University without its part in the pageant. It was customary for the Chamber of Rhetoric to organise for the occasion one of those

processions, semi-religious, semi-pagan, so greatly in vogue in the seventeenth century. A white-robed maiden, seated on a car, personated Holy Scripture, and was attended by the four Evangelists, the types of theological learning. Law and Medicine were also represented by allegorical figures, escorted by the most famous jurisconsults and physicians of antiquity. The procession ended with a ship, on which Apollo and the nine Muses supported Neptune, in allusion to the deliverance of Leyden, and the inundation by which she was saved.

Simultaneously with these official fêtes were held free markets, public games, and fairs, with their necessary following of mountebanks and bumpkins. Such sights and amusements must have afforded endless subjects for study to an observer like Rembrandt. Mixing with the crowd, he noted the manners and impressions of the populace, and seized upon

those momentary effects of attitude and gesture, which he afterwards rendered with such amazing truth and eloquence. But it was in the Town-hall that the student found enjoyment most congenial to his tastes. It was thrown open to the public at these seasons, and there, side by side with banners wrested from the enemy, and spoil taken from the tent of Francesco de Valdez himself, Rembrandt studied the two famous pictures of those Leyden painters who had spent the greater part of their lives in his native town, Cornelis



GATE OF THE "DOELEN" OF ST. GEORGE AT LEYDEN (1614).

(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

Engelbrechtsz and his pupil, Lucas Huyghensz, better known as Lucas van Leyden. Engelbrechtsz' great triptych,—the *Crucifixion* in the central panel, *Abraham's Sacrifice* and the *Brazen Serpent* on the wings—painted for the Convent of Marienpoel, was preserved at the ruin of the convent towards the end of the sixteenth century, and taken under the guardianship of the municipality, “by reason,” says Van Mander, “of its value, and in memory of the eminent master and citizen, its author.” The work was, indeed, a remarkable one, and its artistic merit justifies the high esteem in which it was held. In the execution, though its analogies with that peculiar to the successors of the Van Eycks are, of course, striking, we find dawning traces of features characteristically Dutch. Such is the realism displayed in the portraits of the donors, members of the Martini family, painted on the reverse of the shutters, and the treatment of the landscape backgrounds, in which the blue tones of the distance are very harmoniously opposed to the brown and yellow tints of the rocks. In the foreground, the artist has even given, in elaborate detail, the exact forms of periwinkles, thistles and succory, and of the brambles entangling the ram which is to take the place of Isaac.

But in the *Last Judgment* of Lucas van Leyden, with its accompanying panels, *Paradise* and *Hell*, Rembrandt must have recognised a deeper love of Nature, a higher originality in design, and a finer sense of richness in harmony and colour. Gazing at this important work, he may have recalled the legends that were current as to the painter's life, his precocity and successes, the manner in which his fame had spread throughout Europe, that career of arduous toil, cut short perhaps by the lordly dissipations of later years, which Dürer chronicled in his account of his own visit to the Netherlands, and friendship with the Dutch master. The picture itself had its history. Painted in 1533 for the Church of St. Peter, it was rescued from destruction in the terrible outbreak of the Iconoclasts, and transferred to the Town-hall in 1577. So great was its fame, Van Mander tells us, that “powerful monarchs had taken steps to acquire it; but their offers were politely declined by the magistrature, who refused to part with the glorious creation of a fellow-citizen.”

The reverence paid to these two masters, and the celebrity of

their works, may well have stimulated Rembrandt's consciousness of his vocation. His tastes were confirmed by the great appreciation with which the talents of his predecessors had been rewarded. He dreamt that he too might some day do honour to his native town, and that his pictures might claim their share of admiration, side by side with the works of his illustrious forerunners. But though his glory has far surpassed theirs, we look in vain for Rembrandt's handiwork in the Leyden Museum, where Lucas's *Last Judgment* and the triptych of his master, Engelbrechtsz, are still conspicuous.

Great as was his delight in these masterpieces, pleasures even more congenial were found in the country round about Leyden, and Rembrandt was never at a loss in hours of relaxation. Though of a tender and affectionate disposition, he was always somewhat unsociable, preferring to observe from a distance, and to live apart, after a fashion of his own. That love of the country which increased with years manifested itself early with him. The situation of his father's house on the ramparts at the western extremity of the town, was such as he himself might have chosen for the indulgence of his solitary mood. Opposite, and in full view of his dwelling, rose the picturesque White Gate, flanked by its Gothic towers, commanding the course of the river; on the other bank, half hidden among trees, were the houses of the superintendent of works, and of the municipal carpenter—buildings of the old Dutch type. His daily walks offered constant variety of scene. In the immediate neighbourhood, towards Rynsburch, were green meadows dotted with grazing cattle, farms sheltered by great trees, canals, and the river itself, with its endless procession of white or coloured sails. Towards Oegtsgeest, where his father owned a pleasure-garden, stretched pasture-lands, and fair domains whose secluded groves were landmarks on the wide plain. If time allowed, he would extend his pilgrimage to the coast, towards Katwyk or Zuytbroeck, the birth-place of his mother's family, where he probably had kinsfolk to visit. This was no doubt the direction in which his steps were most often bent, for here he found Nature given over to herself amidst the billowy tumult of wind-swept

dunes, and sparse herbage tossed and twisted by the gale. Surrounded by this strange landscape, where grandeur and delicacy blend and harmonise, he must often have lost himself in contemplation of infinite horizons beyond the restless gray waters, of the scud of flying clouds driven before the breeze, and the play of their shadows flitting through space. Then on the morrow the daily task seemed more than ever irksome to the poor recluse, and the master's lesson fell on heedless ears. There was no gainsaying indications so strongly manifested. Rembrandt's parents, recognising his disinclination for letters, and his pronounced aptitude for painting, decided to remove him from the Latin school. Renouncing the career they had themselves marked out for him, they consented to his own choice of a vocation, when he was about fifteen years old. His rapid progress in his new course was soon to gratify the ambitions of his family more abundantly than they had ever hoped.

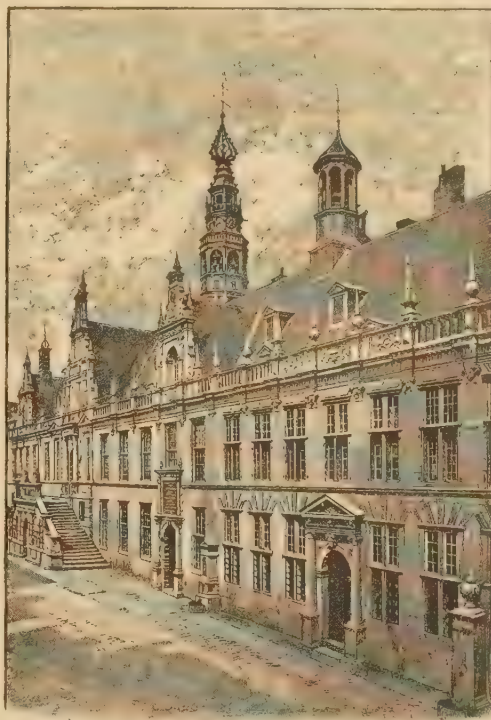
Leyden offered but few facilities to the art student at that period. Painting, after a brief spell of splendour and activity, had given place to science and letters. A first attempt to found a Guild of St. Luke there in 1610 had proved abortive, though Leyden's neighbours, the Hague, Delft, and Haarlem, reckoned many masters of distinction among the members of their respective companies. Rembrandt's parents, however, considered him too young to leave them, and they decided that his apprenticeship should be passed in his native place. An intimacy of long standing, and perhaps some tie of kinship, determined their choice of a master. They fixed upon an artist now almost forgotten, but greatly esteemed by his contemporaries. Jacob van Swanenburch belonged, indeed, to a patrician family of high standing, various members of which had held important posts in the municipal administration from the beginning of the sixteenth century. One of his brothers, Claes, was also a painter; another, Willem, was the engraver of the series of plates already referred to, and their father, Isaac van Swanenburch, who from 1582 to the year of his death, 1614, had held office either as *échevin* or burgomaster of the city, was an artist of considerable talent, as is evident from the series of six pictures painted by him for the



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur Paris

Drapers' Hall.¹ The four best represent various operations in the manufacture of woollen goods. Their frank painting and vigorous colour recall the robust realism of Pieter Aertsen. But it must be confessed that the works of Rembrandt's master were very inferior.

Jacob van Swanenburch was born about 1580, and is supposed to have received his first lessons in painting from his father. By 1610 he must have been well known, for in that year he painted an overmantel for the Town-hall of Leyden with the subject *Pharaoh and his Host drowned in the Red Sea*, an allusion, no doubt, to the catastrophe that overwhelmed the Spaniards towards the end of the siege of Leyden. The picture was probably unimportant; it disappeared in 1666, and no traces of it are discoverable. The same fate befell most of the artist's works; the only one now extant is a *Papal Procession in the Square of S. Peter's*



TOWN-HALL OF LEYDEN.
(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

at Rome, dated 1628, and signed Iacomo Swanenburch. Borne on the stream of emigration which carried so many of his brother artists to Italy at that period, he had sojourned there from 1614 to 1617, and had even taken a wife at Naples. After his return to his native town, where he remained till his death (October 17, 1638) he lived in high repute among his fellow-citizens, less perhaps by reason of

¹ These pictures are now in the Leyden Museum.

his talents than of the *prestige* of his family. His artistic capacity was indeed extremely limited, to judge by the said *Papal Procession*, now in the Copenhagen Gallery. It is a panel with the Pope in the foreground, borne upon the *Sedia gestatoria*, and dispensing blessings to the crowd that presses round him; in the background we see the basilica, the Vatican, and the square as it appeared before the construction of Bernini's colonnade. Setting aside its historic interest, the picture has little to recommend it. The arrangement lacks taste and a due perception of effect; the drawing is very incorrect, especially that of the horses, and the colour monotonous and inharmonious.

Though, as Orlers tells us, Rembrandt could learn little beyond the first principles of his art from such a teacher, he was treated by Swanenburch with a kindness not always met with by such youthful probationers. The conditions of apprenticeship were often very rigorous; the contracts signed by pupils entailed absolute servitude, and exposed them in some hands to treatment which the less long-suffering among them evaded by flight. But Swanenburch belonged by birth to the aristocracy of his native city. Nor did he lack a model in his own family, by which to regulate his conduct, for a painter of the preceding generation, Allart Claesz, a kinsman of the Swanenburchs, had been as a father to his numerous pupils, and had gained the affection of all by his wise benevolence. There seems, on the whole, little cause to regret that Rembrandt was not placed under a more distinguished master. Broadly speaking, the greatest painters are rarely the best teachers; their very originality and the commanding nature of their genius may so powerfully affect the disciple as to paralyse his individual growth. To Rembrandt, with his open mind and independent character, less brilliant teaching was more suitable. His vocation was so pronounced that directly he was permitted to give up all his time to his art he made astonishing progress. Orlers is very positive in his testimony on this point. During his three years under Swanenburch¹ this progress

¹ Three years was the usual term of an apprenticeship. At least, it was the term fixed by the statutes of guilds established in the neighbourhood, notably that of St. Luke at Haarlem.

was such that all fellow-citizens interested in his future "were amazed, and foresaw the glorious career that awaited him."

His noviciate over, Rembrandt had nothing further to learn from Swanenburch, and he was now of an age to quit his father's house. His parents agreed that he should leave them, and perfect himself in a more important art-centre. They made choice of Amsterdam, and of a master in Pieter Lastman, a very well-known painter at that period. Perhaps Swanenburch himself, who had known Lastman in Italy, recommended this course. But we think it was probably due to the intervention of a young compatriot of Rembrandt's, Jan Lievens, who was already one of Lastman's pupils. The families of the two young men belonged to about the same rank in life. Lievens' father, formerly an embroiderer of wall-hangings, had turned farmer, which may perhaps have brought about his acquaintance with the miller Gerritsz. The identity of their tastes no doubt drew the two boys together. But Lievens' talent, even more precocious than Rembrandt's, was early recognised and fostered by his parents. Born on October 24, 1607, he was placed under Joris Verschooten¹ at the age of eight, and soon distinguished himself by a facility of which marvellous stories were told by his admiring fellow-citizens. Some would relate how he had copied a picture of *Democritus and Heraclitus* by Cornelis van Haarlem so perfectly that it was impossible to distinguish it from the original; others how, after hearing a bare description of the circumstances, he had painted a picture representing the repression by the civic guard of the religious outbreak at Leyden on November 4, 1618. At the age of ten, the infant prodigy was sent to pursue his studies in Lastman's studio, where he remained two years, from 1618 to 1620. It does not appear that he was ever Rembrandt's fellow-pupil, as has been commonly asserted; for Rembrandt first went to Lastman in 1624.

¹ Simon van Leeuwen asserts that Verschooten was also Rembrandt's master. But as neither Orlers nor any among the better informed of Rembrandt's biographers mention the fact, it seems probable that Leeuwen, who generally takes his information touching contemporary artists from Orlers, was in error. Neither do we believe that Rembrandt was the pupil of J. Pynas, as has been sometimes asserted. His biographers are equally silent on this point. Houbraken merely says that he imitated "the brown manner of Pynas."

But it is very probable that on his return to Leyden he extolled the teaching of a master whose reputation was then at its height.

In Lastman's studio, methods of instruction much akin to those adopted by Swanenburch were in vogue, though the personal talent modifying them was of a far higher order. Lastman was, in fact, a member of the same band of *Italianisers*, who had gravitated round Elsheimer at Rome. In his valuable study on the latter, Dr. Bode has renewed our interest in this somewhat neglected painter.¹ Though his works have no special merit, Elsheimer's is an important figure in art history. The influence he exercised, notably on painters of the foreign

colony in Rome, is undeniable. The fertility and flexibility of his art contributed largely to the transformation of painting. By taking the picturesque side of subjects hitherto approached only in the grand manner, and treating them with the elaborate finish proper to their small dimensions, he gave new life to apparently exhausted themes. An indefatigable worker, modest, intelligent, and studious, he was beloved by all who knew him, and was in special favour with the Dutch painters, who, by virtue



OLD WOMAN ASLEEP.
About 1635 (B. 350).

alike of traditions and natural leanings, were best prepared to understand and to imitate him.

Lastman was one of Elsheimer's most ardent disciples at Rome. Sprung from a family in which the liberal professions were highly esteemed, he reckoned many artists among his kindred.² He went to Italy when about twenty, and remained three or four years. In 1607 he returned to Amsterdam, bringing with him a store of classic tradition and study, which served for artistic pabulum till his death.

¹ *Studien zur Geschichte der holländischen Malerei*, by W. Bode. 1883. 1 vol. 8vo. Pp. 231-356.

² The life and works of Lastman have been exhaustively treated in a notice by Messrs. Bredius and De Roever, published in *Oud-Holland* (iv. pp. 1-23).



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

About 1633 (B. 73).

While the art of his native land was developing its natural tendencies and character around him on every side, he clung to Elsheimer's

subjects, often mingling the familiar types or features of Holland with reminiscences of Italian art and scenery. Pictures by him are scattered throughout Europe, but may be found in greatest number in German galleries, public and private. The vogue they once enjoyed was followed by complete neglect; and recent researches connected with Rembrandt, rather than their intrinsic merit, has brought them into notice again.

An *Ulysses and Nausicaa* in the Brunswick Museum, signed with his monogram, is dated 1609, and was therefore painted two years after Lastman's return from Italy. It was a favourite episode

P
1609

with the artist, for ten years later he painted it again, in a picture now in the Augsburg Museum, modifying the composition in some notable points. Ulysses has escaped from the wreck, and kneels naked and suppliant, endeavouring by the humility of his demeanour to reassure Nausicaa's companions, a band of nymphs in turbans and fantastic costumes, who are flying in terror from the feast prepared by them on the shore. The daughter of Alcinoüs advances alone towards the hero, and expresses her compassion in somewhat exaggerated pantomime. The colour is hard and violent; the brick-reds of the carnations stand out in harsh relief against a dull flat sky. In a *David Singing in the Temple* of the same collection,

Pietro Lastman
fecit Anno 1618

signed Pietro Lastman and dated 1618, there is the same crudity, and total lack of harmony. The work, notwithstanding the termination of the painter's Christian name, is rather Flemish than

Italian. In type and costume, the singing children of the foreground, and the musicians who perform lustily on various instruments—violin, violoncello, trombone, trumpet and tambourine—vaguely recall the figures of Rubens. In a collection of great interest to students of Rembrandt's predecessors and contemporaries, that of M. Semenoff of St. Petersburg, there is an *Annunciation* of the same date. The kneel-

ing Virgin has thrown aside the work on which she was engaged. Near the basket containing it a cat is playing with a little bell on the floor, while an angel in a red chasuble points heavenwards to the Holy Spirit hovering among clouds. The angel's gesture is expressive; but the execution is coarse and heavy. The same date, 1618, again appears on an *Annunciation to the Magi*, in Count Moltke's gallery at Copenhagen. The master, by way of displaying his dexterity, has introduced a number of vases of every shape and style to the left, and to the right, a variety of animals: an ass, a horse, goats, camels and parrots. Here again the tonality is crude, but there is a certain vigour in its harshness. An unsigned and undated picture in the Cassel Gallery, the *Sacrifice to Juno* (No. 500 in the Catalogue), has such strong affinities with the above that we are inclined to pronounce it the work of Lastman at this same period, 1618, the time of his greatest activity. The marble statue of the goddess is enthroned on an altar surrounded by colonnades and porticoes; a group of worshippers presses round her; in the distance is the temple of Tivoli, which Rembrandt, like his master, often introduced in his backgrounds. The general effect is thoroughly unpleasant; the eye is offended by a mass of discordant tones; vermilion reds are opposed either to pale neutral tints, dull grays, or violent blues and yellows, regardless of harmony and of unity. *Abraham with the Angels*, a work of 1621, also in M. Semenov's collection, and the *Abraham's Sacrifice*, a *grisaille* in the Amsterdam Ryksmuseum, are chiefly interesting as dealing with subjects often treated by Rembrandt and his pupils in after years. In a *Raising of Lazarus* of 1622, recently acquired by the Hague Museum, Lastman's garish tonality is peculiarly offensive, for the action takes place at the mouth of a cave, where the use of chiaroscuro was imperative.

These works were all produced in Lastman's best period, about the time when Lievens, and after him Rembrandt, became his pupils. In none of them, however, can we discern any of that preoccupation with the problems of chiaroscuro ascribed to him by certain writers, who claim that he pointed out the way to Rembrandt. There are

traces of it, no doubt, in a small picture in the Haarlem Museum, *Christmas Night*, bearing a date which Vosmaer read "1629." We found the figures quite illegible after careful examination, and several Dutch friends whose aid we invoked were no more successful in deciphering them. The general arrangement, the attitude and gesture of Joseph, and above all, the treatment of light, show strong analogies with the work of Rembrandt. But the sense of chiaroscuro here displayed was not uncommon at the period, and may be observed in the pictures of many contemporary painters. It is an important

factor in the work of two artists who had felt the influence of Caravaggio, Valentin in France, and Honthorst in Holland. But with them, as with Lastman, such effects of light are always rendered by abrupt and violent contrasts, and have none of the infinity of gradation and transparency in the shadows which give them beauty.

When Rembrandt entered Lastman's *atelier*, the master was at the zenith of his fame. His contemporaries lauded him to the skies, proclaiming



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.
1630 (B. 304).

him the Phoenix and the Apelles of the age. He was further held to be one of the best judges living of Italian art, and as this now began to find favour in Holland, he was often called upon to assess the value of pictures for sales or inventories. His house was a popular one, and his young pupil was doubtless brought into contact with famous artists and other persons of distinction. Such intercourse must have been of great value to him, enlarging his mind, and developing his powers of observation. How or where

Rembrandt was lodged at Amsterdam we know not. Before parting with their son, his parents had no doubt provided a comfortable home for him. It was a common practice in those days, and one which still obtains in Holland, for students to board and lodge in the



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.
About 1631 (B. 343).

houses of citizens, where they were treated as members of the family. This was usual even among the University students at Leyden, who did not belong to the town. In a census paper of 1581, quoted

by Vosmaer, we find that Rembrandt's grandparents had received as a boarder one "Egma, native of Friesland." It is therefore possible that Rembrandt may have been placed in the home of friends at Amsterdam ; but more probably he was an inmate of his master's house, such being the usual arrangement under the circumstances. The affectionate terms on which he always remained with Lastman seem to favour this hypothesis. The conditions under which he would have been admitted to his master's home may be gleaned from other sources. Such conditions were generally arranged between the contracting parties, and were not often embodied in a legal document. A few such are, however, extant, one among them being the agreement, of about this date, between Isaac Isaksz, a painter of Amsterdam, and Adriaen Caraman, a youth of seventeen, who wished to become his pupil. The latter engages to grind colours and prepare canvases for himself and his master, and in all ways to conduct himself zealously and submissively as a "servant-pupil." In return, Isaac is to give him food and instruction, and the lad's father, on his part, agrees to furnish him with "a barrel of herrings or cod as required, and a bed and bedding." Such a state of semi-servitude involved more or less of hardship, according to the character of the master ; it was possible to alleviate it by the payment of certain sums of money, which ensured more of liberty and comfort to the apprentice. Though Leyden was at no great distance from Amsterdam, Rembrandt probably received few visits from his parents. His father could not easily have left his mill, nor his mother her household duties. But no doubt occasional gifts were despatched by the loving mother, with recommendations to good behaviour and economy from the father. The latter counsel was assuredly not unnecessary ; generous and impulsive, the young man had little idea of the value of money, as he sufficiently proved in later life.

Rembrandt spent but a short time in Lastman's studio. Lastman, though greatly superior to Swanenburch, had all the vices of the *Italianisers*. He had also, in common with them, a taste which reflected the preferences of the public, and herein lay the

secret of his success. His drawing was correct, but characterless ; his colour harsh and discordant, his handling heavy and laboured. These defects give an air of monotony to his works, in spite of the extreme variety of his subjects. In his treatment of these subjects he never goes beyond the superficial aspect ; he fails to make them intrinsically expressive ; and seeks to supply local colour by a crowd of accessories and picturesque details. Not only does he fail to touch the spectator ; he seems to have had no such end in view. His mediocre art was, in fact, a compromise between the Italian and the Dutch ideal. Without attaining to the style of the one or the sincerity of the other, and with no marked originality in his methods, he continued those attempts to fuse the unfusible in which his predecessors had exhausted themselves. To Rembrandt's single-minded temperament such a system was thoroughly repugnant. His natural instincts and love of truth rebelled against it. Italy was the one theme of his master, that Italy which the pupil knew not, and was never to know. But he saw everywhere around him things teeming with interest for him, things which appealed to his artistic soul in language more intimate and direct than that of his teacher. His own love of Nature was less sophisticated ; he saw in her beauties at once deeper and less complex. He longed to study her as she was, apart from the so-called intermediaries which obscured his vision and falsified the truth of his impressions.

It may be also that exile from the home he loved so dearly became more and more painful to Rembrandt. He longed for his own people ; the spirit of independence was stirring within him, and he felt that he had little to gain from further teaching. Before he had been quite six months under Lastman he returned to Leyden, in 1624, determining, as Orlers tells us, "to study and practise painting alone, in his own fashion." Notwithstanding which, Lastman's influence on his development was very persistent, and it was long before Rembrandt freed himself entirely from it. Down to the period of his fullest maturity, we find traces of Lastman's teaching in his methods of composition, in his fancy for Orientalisms, in the familiarity with

which he treats certain themes. More than once he borrowed the main features of a composition, and even its general arrangement, from his master. In further evidence of his respect for Lastman, we find two volumes of the master's drawings among his collections. Lastman, on the other hand, seems to have had no premonition of his pupil's greatness. No single work of Rembrandt's figures in the inventory of his effects published by Messrs. Bredius and De Roever.



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.

1630 (B. 294).



A PEASANT CARRYING MILKPAILS.
About 1650 (B. 213).

CHAPTER II

FIRST PICTURES PAINTED AT LEYDEN—‘ST. PAUL IN PRISON’ AND ‘THE MONEY-CHANGER’—(1627), ‘SAMSON AND DELILAH’ (1628), AND ‘THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE’—REMBRANDT’S PORTRAITS OF HIMSELF—HIS FIRST ETCHINGS—HIS METHODS.



REMBRANDT, FULL-FACE, LAUGHING.
1630 (B. 316).

THE return of one so beloved by his family as Rembrandt was naturally hailed with joyful effusion in the home circle. But happy as he was to find himself thus welcomed, he had no intention of living idly under his father’s roof, and he at once set resolutely to work. He had thrown off a yoke that had become irksome to him. Henceforth he had to seek guidance from himself alone, choosing his own path at his

own risk. How did he employ himself on his arrival at Leyden, and what were the fruits of that initial period? Nothing is known on these points, and up to the present time no work by Rembrandt of earlier date than 1627 has been discovered. It must also be admitted that his first pictures—for the works of this date are paintings—give little presage of future greatness, and scarcely indicate the character of his genius. But amidst the evidences of youthful inexperience in these somewhat hasty works, we note details of great significance.

The *St. Paul in Prison*, formerly in the Schönborn collection, and acquired by the Stuttgart Museum in 1867, bears the date 1627, together with the signature and monogram here reproduced. It is, on the whole, a mediocre work; dry in handling, gray in colour, and perfunctory in the treatment of chiaroscuro. There is a lack of subordination amounting to clumsiness in the rendering of

Rembrandt
fecit Rf 1627

details. And yet, on closer examination of the pale sunbeam that lights the cell, the serious countenance of the captive, absorbed in

meditation, and pausing, pen in hand, to find the right expression for his thought, his earnest gaze, and contemplative attitude, we recognise something beyond the conception of a commonplace tiro. We discern evidences of careful observation which Rembrandt in the full possession of his powers would, no doubt, have turned to higher account; but even with the imperfect means at his command, he produces a striking effect. The patient and accurate execution of accessories such as the straw, the great iron sword, and the books by the apostle's side, betokens a conscientious artist, who had been to Nature for such help as she could give him.

The *Money-Changer*, which became the property of the Berlin Gallery in 1881, bears the same date, 1627, with a monogram

RH. 1627

formed of the initials of the name: Rembrandt Harmensz.¹ An old man, seated at a table littered with parchments, ledgers and money-bags, holds in his left hand a candle, the flame of which he shades with his

right, and carefully examines a doubtful coin. Here again the brushwork is somewhat heavy, and the piles of scrawled and dusty papers give an incoherent look to the composition. On the other hand, the light and the values are happily distributed

¹ It was customary in Holland to add the baptismal name of the father to that of each child. Thus, Harmenszoon, son of Harmen, which became Harmensz by abbreviation.

and truthfully rendered. The general tone is rather yellow and monotonous; but the colour-scheme is subdued with a view to the general effect by a deliberate deadening and neutralising of tints such as the green and violet of the table-cloth and mantle. The impasto is somewhat loaded in the lights, and has been reduced in places and apparently scraped down to avoid too startling a contrast with the shadows, where the brushwork is so slight as to reveal the transparent browns of the ground. Unlike Elsheimer and Honthorst, who in treating such subjects made the actual source of light in all its intensity a chief feature of the picture, Rembrandt conceals the flame, and contents himself with rendering the light it sheds on surrounding objects. He felt that such attempts as those of his predecessors overstepped the limitations of their art; and, restricting himself to such variety of light and shadow as may be won without the unpleasantness of violent contrasts, he concentrated all his powers on the delicate modelling of the old man's head.

These were both compositions of single persons, which it was possible to copy directly from nature. Two pictures of the following year, in which several figures are introduced, presented greater difficulties. He cannot be said to have overcome them. In the *Samson delivered to the Philistines*, formerly in the collection of the Princes of Orange, now in the King's Palace at Berlin, the composition leaves much to be desired. Like the two preceding pictures, it is painted on an oak panel, but of somewhat larger size ($24\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{3}{4}$ inches), and the monogram with which it is signed is slightly modified. To the interlaced initials R and H a horizontal stroke is appended, which we shall find on nearly all the works of this period, and which, with Dr. Bode's concurrence, we take to be an L, signifying *Leidensis* or *Lugdunensis*. The artist continued to use it throughout his sojourn at Leyden, and abandoned it shortly after leaving his native city.

RL 1628

Samson lies asleep on the floor at his mistress's feet, clad in a loose tunic of pale yellow, girt at the waist by a striped scarf of blue, white, pink and gold, from which hangs a Javanese creese. Delilah wears a robe of dull violet bordered with blue and gold, in pleasant

harmony with the colours of Samson's costume ; but her tame, insipid carnations, ill-defined features, and colourless fair hair, make up an insignificant type which recurs in several works of this period. She has already shorn a handful of her lover's locks, and turns to show them to a Philistine behind her. The latter, armed to the teeth, advances cautiously, and a comrade even less confident than he,

hides prudently behind the bed-curtains, showing only his helmeted head and naked sword. Though the arrangement of the three figures in a line betrays the inexperience of youth, the handling has become broader and more subtle, and we note an increased sense of harmony. The figures are placed in frank relief against the yellowish background of the floor and wall, and the brilliant effect of the sunlight that falls on the woman's breast and robe, and on Samson's



PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT.
(Cassel Museum.)

tunic, is heightened by the dark shadows to the right of the picture. A characteristic detail of frequent occurrence in later works may be noted : among the locks in Delilah's hand are two or three strands drawn with the butt-end of the brush upon the moist paint.

The same touch of coarseness in the handling, the same violent contrasts of light and shadow, are apparent in a *Presentation in the Temple*, once in the Sagan Collection, and recently bought by M. Weber of Hamburg from Count Reichenbach von Löwemberg. It is signed with Rembrandt's name in full, and is not dated, but may,

we think, be given to this period. The Infant Jesus on Simeon's lap is strangely rigid and wooden; the composition, however, is better balanced, and the group of persons kneeling before a window is crowned in a very happy fashion by the erect figure of the Prophetess Anna. The golden and russet tones harmonise well with the blue robe of the Virgin, and the sentiment of the scene is adequately expressed.

As in the preceding works, the pantomime is vigorous to the verge of exaggeration. The young man's robust good sense made him anxious beyond measure to be comprehensible; and to preserve life and reality in the suggestion of action. Though his gestures are apt to become over-emphatic, and his types vulgar, his purpose is always clearly set forth; and there is no mistaking his meaning. In process of time, he learnt to render his thought by more subtle and varied methods, without any loss to his directness of expression.



THE MONEY-CHANGER.¹
(Fragment of the picture in the Berlin Museum.)

A tiny picture ($8\frac{1}{16} \times 6\frac{1}{16}$ inches) painted on copper (almost the only one to be found in all Rembrandt's *œuvre*) is signed with the painter's monogram, and dated 1628.¹ The subject is somewhat enigmatic,

¹ It was formerly in the possession of Mr. Otto Pein, of Berlin, and figured in a public sale at Cologne in 1888. It now belongs to Mr. von der Heydt, of Elberfeld.

but Dr. Bode, no doubt rightly, conjectures it to represent the *Denial of St. Peter*. The Apostle, if it be he, dressed in complete armour, is at bay among his interrogators, who eye him curiously as they stand grouped about a large fire, in the Court of the High Priest's house. The composition impresses by virtue of its peculiarity, its variety of expression, and its truthfulness of effect. In this restricted field the execution seems more dexterous and less heavy, and the chiaroscuro more carefully studied.

That fidelity to the living model, and knowledge of chiaroscuro, of which traces are to be found even in these early works, Rembrandt acquired after a fashion of his own, by direct studies from Nature—studies which were powerfully to affect his development. Models were very scarce in Holland at this period, especially at Leyden, which, unlike Haarlem, possessed no Academy of painting. But means are never wanting to the artist really eager for instruction, and neither will nor intelligence was at fault in Rembrandt's case. Instead of looking abroad for means of improvement, the young master made them for himself. He determined to be his own model, and to enlist the services of his father, mother, and relatives. By dedicating the first-fruits of his talents to them, he secured a group of sitters whose patience was inexhaustible. Pleased to be of use to him, they fell in with every fresh caprice, and lent themselves to all varieties of experiment. Rembrandt turned their complaisance to good account. Inspired by a passionate devotion to his art, he studied with such ardour that, to quote the words of Houbraken, "he never left his work in his father's house as long as daylight lasted."

To this period must be assigned several little studies of heads on panel, which have only lately been restored to Rembrandt. The attribution was long contested, even after Dr. Bode had drawn the attention of critics to them. It was irreconcilable with established theories, and the works themselves had little in common with others following closely upon them. The first of the series, though without date or signature, is undoubtedly by Rembrandt, and may be bracketed with the *St. Paul in Prison* as one of his earliest pictures. It belongs to the Cassel Museum (No. 208 in the Catalogue) and is a portrait of the painter at about twenty or twenty-one years old.

The face, turned three-quarters to the right, is broad and massive; and stands out in strong relief against a light background of gray-blue. The sunlight falls full on the neck, ear, and right cheek; the forehead, eyes, and the whole of the left side are in deep shadow. A narrow strip of white shirt appears above the brown dress. The ruddy complexion, full nose, and sturdy neck, the parted lips, above which a soft down is visible, the unruly hair, all bespeak health and vigour. The type in its robust simplicity is that of a young peasant. The broad and summary execution emphasises this impression; the touch is free and fat, and, as in the *Samson* at Berlin, the hair is drawn with dashing strokes of the brush handle. The eyes, though barely visible through the shadow, seem to gaze with singular penetration at the spectator. The contrast of light and shadow is very pronounced, but the transition is skilfully effected by the use of an intermediate tone, and all hardness is thus avoided.

In a small portrait in the Gotha Museum (No. 181 in the Catalogue), the treatment of chiaroscuro is still more discreet, while the composition is less summary, and the expression more penetrating. Neither date nor monogram is very legible; traces, however, of Rembrandt's usual signature are to be deciphered, with the date 1629, which seems to us a very probable one. The gradations are here less apparent, and are carried through with great delicacy; values are better observed; the touch is freer and lighter, notably in the eyes, the mouth, and the white collar overlying the brown dress. The impasto, though thinner than before, is still sufficient to enable the artist to follow his usual practice, and to render the curling hair with a scraper, or with the butt-end of the brush, sweeping through the moist paint. This process, more expeditious than correct, is repeated in another portrait of larger dimensions, also in the Gotha Museum (No. 182 in the Catalogue). It is signed with Rembrandt's usual monogram, but is so clumsy in parts that its authenticity seems to us more than doubtful.

The portrait in the Hague Museum, though probably of the same period as these, is by far the best and most interesting of the series. Here Rembrandt has evidently put forth all his strength, anxious not

only to produce a faithful likeness, but to display the experience gained by recent study, in a carefully considered work. As in the preceding examples, the head, turned three-quarters to the spectator, and illumined by a strong light from the left, is set against a neutral gray background of medium value. The carnations are very brilliant, and are modelled with extreme skill in a full impasto, following the surfaces as we shall find it doing continually more and more in Rembrandt's practice. The shadows, though intense, preserve their transparency. A dark gray dress, and a somewhat crumpled white collar turned over a steel gorget, blend into pleasant harmony with the head. The type is that of Cassel and Gotha, but slenderer and more refined. There is more distinction in the bearing, greater elegance in the dress. The features are irregular; but the fresh lips seem about to open, the small eyes gaze from under their prominent brows with a frank fearlessness, while between them we already see that vertical fold which habits of ceaseless observation deepened more and more as years went by. This youthful head, crowned by the flowing hair that falls in masses across the forehead, charms us by its air of health, simplicity and unstudied grace. It is instinct with power and intelligence, and with an indescribable aspect of authority, which explains the ascendancy the young man was soon to obtain over the minds of his contemporaries. Simultaneously with these pictures, Rembrandt evidently produced a large number of drawings. But, unfortunately, most of these are either lost or scattered in different collections under false attributions. Very few are known to us. One is a sketch in black chalk, belonging to the Hamburg Museum. The subject is the head of a youth, resembling Rembrandt himself, with a very brilliant effect of light. Another, in the British Museum, is a sketch in Indian ink, made with a few strokes of the brush. It represents the artist in a braided tunic, and is reproduced in an etching of 1629.

Rembrandt no longer confined himself to drawing and painting; his first etchings appeared in 1628, very little later than his first pictures. As in these, he took himself for a model in his etchings, and never tired of experimentalising on his own person for purposes of study. It was a habit he retained throughout his career. With



object ; he seeks to render those apparent modifications which light more or less vivid, more or less oblique, produces in form, and in the intensity of shadows. The result is a whole series of such essays : the execution in most of these is very summary ; but by an ingenious shifting of artificial light, and a careful study of the variations due to such successive displacements, he gains a complete insight into the laws of chiaroscuro. In many of the remaining plates design is the main consideration, and light plays but a secondary part. The management of the point is firmer and more assured ; the master's grasp on Nature has become closer, and he strives to render her most characteristic traits.¹ He seeks variety in attitudes, expressions and costumes. He drapes himself, and poses, hand on hip, before his mirror ; now uncovered and dishevelled, now with a hat, a cap, a fur toque on his head. Every diversity of emotion is studied from his own features : gaiety, terror, pain, sadness, concentration, satisfaction and anger.

Such experiments had, of course, their false and artificial aspects. Grimace rather than expression is suggested by many of these pensive airs, haggard eyes, affrighted looks, mouths wide with laughter, or contracted by pain. But in all such violent and factitious contrasts, Rembrandt sought the essential features of passions with great obvious effects, passions that stamp themselves plainly on the human face, and which the painter should therefore be able to render unmistakably. To this end, he forced expression to the verge of burlesque ; and, gradually correcting his deliberate exaggerations, he learnt to command the whole gamut of sentiment that lies between extremes, and to impress its various manifestations, from the deepest to the most transient, on the human face.

From this time forward, scarcely a year passed without some souvenir, painted or engraved, of his own personality. These portraits succeeded each other so rapidly and regularly, as to form a record of the gradual changes wrought by time in his appearance and in the character of his genius.

¹ Yet nothing in Rembrandt's work is more exhaustive or more subtle than that "*Bust of an Old Woman lightly etched*," of 1628. It is the first etched portrait of his mother.—F. W.

How did Rembrandt gain his knowledge of engraving? Who taught him the rudiments of the art? We know not, and none of his biographers throw any light on the question.

The name and works of Lucas, the famous engraver, a native, like himself, of Leyden, were still revered in that city, and from his youth up, Rembrandt's admiration for him was so unbounded that he was willing to make any sacrifice to become the owner of a complete set of his works. What better guide could he have sought? As his knowledge of the master increased, he must have been deeply impressed, not only by the simplicity of his methods, but by his preoccupation with those very problems which fascinated his own mind, notably the rendering of light, and effects of chiaroscuro. As M. Duplessis justly observes, in his *History of Engraving*:¹ "No engraver prior to Lucas van Leyden had greatly concerned himself with perspective, nor had any before him shown a like anxiety so to illuminate an intricate composition as to place each figure in its right plane, each object in its right place." Rembrandt's genius had many analogies with that of his famous compatriot. Both were painters, as well as engravers. They had the same love of the picturesque, the same faculty of observation, the same tendency to blend familiarity with devotion in the treatment of religious themes, the same desire to make every resource of their art auxiliary to the expression of ideas.

Nor had the traditions of Lucas van Leyden died out in his native town. Publishers such as the Elzevirs gave constant employment to co-operators who produced illustrations for their books; portraits of distinguished persons, statesmen, soldiers, or men of letters, were in great request throughout the country, and were freely produced by skilled engravers like Jakob de Gheyn, Pieter Bailly, father of the painter David Bailly, Bartolomeus Dolendo, and Willem van Swanenburch, the brother of Rembrandt's master. It is possible that, while at Amsterdam, Rembrandt may have met a brother of Lastman's, who was an engraver of some ability, and have received instruction from him. We may add

¹ 1 vol. 12mo. Hachette, 1869, p. 104.

that Rembrandt was no solitary experimentalist in his native town at the period of these early essays. Several young men shared his studies, copying from the same models, attempting the same effects of chiaroscuro, and even imitating his methods of execution. Of this we have ample and decisive proofs, which throw valuable light on the career of the young artist.



REMBRANDT WITH HAGGARD EYES.

1630 (B. 320)



LANDSCAPE WITH A FLOCK OF SHEEP.
1650 (B. 224).

CHAPTER III

REMBRANDT'S PAINTED AND ENGRAVED PORTRAITS OF HIS FATHER AND MOTHER—STUDIES MADE IN COMMON WITH HIS FELLOW-STUDENTS—'LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS,' 'THE BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH,' 'ST. JEROME AT PRAYER'—REMBRANDT'S FIRST PURCHASES OF WORKS OF ART.



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.
1628 (B. 352).

THE most intimate among Rembrandt's youthful friends was Jan Lievens.

They were almost of the same age, and were further drawn together by community of tastes. Lievens, like Rembrandt, had returned from Lastman's studio to his parents' home at Leyden. Like Rembrandt, he was now in search of his vocation, a search he in fact pursued throughout his life, without any strik-

ing development of originality, for the sojourn he afterwards made in England brought him under the influence of Vandyck. For the moment, however, working side by side with Rembrandt, and from the same models, he busied himself with those studies of light, the effects of which are to be traced in many of his pictures and etchings at this period.

A fellow-citizen of Rembrandt and of Lievens, their junior by

some six or seven years, was soon to join them in their studies. This was no other than Gerard Dou, whose presence in such company is surprising enough. No less likely fellow-student can well be imagined for Rembrandt than this master, judging merely by the special bent of his talent, his elaborate execution and minute finish. But his early works fully bear out the very explicit statements of Houbraken, which were taken in the main from Orlers himself. Gerard Dou was the son of a glazier named Douwe Jansz, and was born at Leyden, April 7, 1613. His artistic vocation was recognised at a very early age, and he was placed under the engraver B. Dolendo, with whom he remained for a year and a half. He then passed to the *atelier* of a glass-painter, one Pieter Kouwenhorn, where he spent at least two years. His father then took him into his own workshop, meaning to make him a partner in the business; but, seeing the imprudences he committed in the exercise of the trade, the elder Dou became alarmed and, dreading some accident, gave him leave to return to his painting. The fact that he made choice of Rembrandt for his master is significant, and shows the consideration already enjoyed by the latter in his native town, in spite of his extreme youth. Gerard Dou entered his studio February 14, 1628, and remained with him till 1631, about three years.¹

Another artist came to complete the circle at about the same period, the engraver Joris van Vliet. Van Vliet's productions were very unequal, and their average of merit was not high. When left to himself, his work was coarse and brutal, utterly wanting in taste, and sometimes positively ludicrous. But, living in community with Rembrandt, he reproduced many of the master's studies and pictures, and we owe to him our knowledge of several works which have disappeared, and exist only in his engravings.

Rembrandt was the life and soul of this busy, eager group, which, as we shall see, found the most patient of models among the inmates of his father's house. Their studies have opened the

¹ This date, which is given by Houbraken, confirms the notion that Rembrandt's sojourn in Leyden was longer than was formerly supposed.

family circle to us, and enable us to become familiar with several of its members.

The two first etchings which Rembrandt dated belong to the year 1628, and are signed with what was then his usual monogram. They are both portraits of his mother (B. Nos. 352 and 354), a woman of placid and venerable mien. Her hair is drawn back from a wide forehead lined with many wrinkles; from beneath brows thick and prominent as her son's, the shrewd and kindly eyes meet those of the spectator with an expression denoting much natural benevolence, and a deep knowledge of life. We meet her again in two drawings in the Dresden Cabinet, and in three etchings, all of which may be, we think, referred to 1631, the date on two among them. In the first (B. 343) the old lady sits before a table, her little wrinkled hands crossed upon her breast. She wears a black veil on her head, and a black mantle round her shoulders. The widow's garb, the contemplative attitude, proclaim the subject of her meditation. She is thinking, no doubt, of one who is no more, of that faithful companion through good days and evil, the husband she lost the year before, and buried in the family grave in St. Peter's Church, April 27, 1630. Here the portraiture is very exact. The son, already his mother's pride, has brought all his care and tenderness to bear upon his work, and shows an evident solicitude as to the likeness. She sat again in the same year, probably a few months later. This time the result was a freer study. She is stouter, and more wrinkled. Her costume is an Oriental robe: a scarf is twisted turban-wise round her head, the ends falling on her shoulders (B. 348). Two other studies, for which she also sat, follow at short intervals. In one, dating from about 1633, she is represented in her widow's dress again (B. 344). The other is dated 1633 (B. 351), and was probably executed during a visit of the mother to the son at Amsterdam, or of the son to the mother at Leyden.

Painted portraits of his mother are no less numerous. The first we shall notice is that acquired by the Ryksmuseum in 1889, a naïve study, slightly awkward in execution, dating probably from about 1627—1628. The sitter wears a fur cap, over which is passed a

white pleated scarf, striped with narrow pink lines ; her jacket of soft blue harmonises well with its border of tawny fur. She holds the book in her hand up to her eyes. It is a Bible, open at St. Luke's Gospel. The timidity of a pupil lately set free from Lastman's studio is evident. But in such details as the minute gradations of the white pages, the delicate transparency of the half-tones, the wrinkles of the forehead and hand, carefully rendered, line by line, we recognise the conscientious reverence underlying a labour of love. The next in order are the two portraits at Windsor Castle, and at Wilton House. They are a little later, and were probably painted about 1629—1630. The colouring in both is gray and pale, but the handling is more skilful, and the greenish blues and pale violets make up a delicate harmony. The portrait in the Oldenburg Museum (No. 166 in the Catalogue) is more important. It was bought at the Pommersfelden sale in 1867, and bears the well-known monogram, and the date 1631. This picture was formerly known as *Anna the Prophetess*. Rembrandt has painted his mother in an Eastern dress, seated, and reading attentively from a large book on her lap. On her head is a broad-brimmed violet hat of fantastic shape, bordered with gold, and fastened across with a scarf. Her ample robe of purplish red velvet is worn over a dress of pale yellow. A white coif hides her hair, after the fashion then prevalent among Jewish women. A mild light glances on the border of the robe, the top of the hat, the book, and the hand resting upon it, in which every wrinkle is carefully reproduced. The relation of this cold light to the coloured shadows is rendered with absolute truth, and the deep purple of the mantle forms a beautiful harmony with the gray tints of the fur, and of the neutral background against which the figure is set.

A reversed plate of this portrait was engraved by Van Vliet (B. 18), and Lievens gives a free rendering of the features in two etchings (B. Nos. 30 and 40), in neither of which, however, has he been very careful to preserve the likeness. Gerard Dou, on the other hand, has drawn her with all his accustomed precision ; in six of his pictures at least we recognise the old lady at a glance.



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

One of these is in the Louvre, the *Reading Woman* (No. 2356 in the new Catalogue); two in the Dresden Museum (Nos. 1719 and 1720); another at Berlin (No. 847); a fifth in the Schwerin Museum (No. 326), the *Woman with the Spinning-wheel*; and the last, of which we shall have more to say presently, in the Cassel Museum (No. 234).

Bearing in mind Rembrandt's practice of taking his models from members of the household, we naturally look for numerous portraits of his father among his works. But down to the present time their identification has been based merely on hypotheses more or less plausible.

Not long ago, Mr. Middleton-Wake, who has made a special study of Rembrandt's etched work, gave it as his opinion that Rembrandt's father was probably the original of the *Old Man with a long beard, and fur-trimmed cap* (B. 262), one of the best of the early



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.
(By Gerard Dou, Cassel Museum.)

plates. In my attempts to classify the studies executed by Rembrandt and his friends at this period, I was struck by the frequent appearance of a very characteristic type, which recurs no less than nine times among the master's engraved works, not to speak of three heads scratched upon a single plate (B. 374). The nine are the following in Bartsch's catalogue: Nos. 262, 286, 287, 292, 293, 294, 304, 321, and 324. With the exception of the two *Oriental Heads* comprised in this list (Nos. 286, 287), the same type somewhat

more freely treated, all these prints, save one (B. 263) are signed with the monogram so often referred to, and dated 1630. The apparent exception may possibly belong to this same year, for the date, 1631, figures on the second state only. They were therefore all executed before the death of Rembrandt's father.¹

Besides these etchings, I know of eleven paintings executed at this period, all from the same model. They represent a bald-headed old man, with a thin face, long nose, bright eyes, full and rather red eyelids, thin compressed lips, a moustache turned up at the ends, a short beard, and a small mole on the chin. The constant recurrence of this type, the fact that Rembrandt painted him more than once in the steel gorget and accoutrements which he himself wears in the Hague portrait, and various minor indications, seemed to me strong evidences that the sitter was Rembrandt's father. My conjecture was soon fully confirmed. During my last visit to the Cassel Gallery, I noticed a pair of small portraits by Gerard Dou. They are ovals, of exactly the same size ($9\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ inches), and obviously represent a husband and wife. The female portrait is unquestionably Rembrandt's mother; and in the male portrait I recognised the type so familiar to me in the plates above mentioned.

Shortly afterwards, my presumption was further strengthened by two other small portraits, this time the work of Rembrandt himself. One was that portrait of the artist's mother, recently acquired by my friend, Dr. Bredius, at Rotterdam, which appeared at the Exhibition of Old Masters held at the Hague during the summer of 1890. The other was a little panel precisely similar in dimensions and execution, which, to my great surprise, I discovered a few weeks later in the Nantes Museum, where it is ascribed to Van Vliet. At

¹ We have, moreover, proof positive that a portrait of Rembrandt's father was included among these etchings. A complete list of the plates figures in an inventory of the effects of Clement de Jonghe, dated February 11th, 1679, the titles given being those by which the etchings were known shortly after the death of Rembrandt. No. 53 in the list is catalogued, *Rembrandt's Father* (*Oud-Holland*, viii. p. 181). In the inventory of one Sybout van Caerdecamp, dated Leyden, February 23rd, 1644, mention is also made of "*A Portrait of Mynheer Rembrandt's Father.*"

a glance I identified the type with that of Rembrandt's father, as known to me in the etchings, and in Gerard Dou's portrait at Cassel.¹

The portrait of Rembrandt's father in the Ryksmuseum, probably painted about 1629, bears a forged signature, to which the date 1641 has been clumsily added. It is, in fact, as Dr. Bode discovered not long ago, a copy of an original by Rembrandt, in the possession of Mr. Chamberlain at Brighton. In Mr. Chamberlain's most interesting picture the modelling is elaborately carried out in an impasto, not very fat, but of sufficient consistency, and the high lights are rendered with consummate boldness and precision. The yellowish carnations are relieved against a plain background of gray-green, the shadows are very simply treated, without apparent detail, and are somewhat dingy in tone. But the accurate drawing, the delicate gradation, the absolute sincerity of expression, bear witness to a profoundly conscientious study of the living model. Notwithstanding his evident anxiety to make the likeness as perfect as possible, Rembrandt amused himself by disguising his sitter in a military costume. The honest miller wears a black headgear surmounted by a large red feather; a red mantle is thrown over his gray coat, a steel gorget clasps his neck. To complete the illusion, he has given his moustaches a fierce upward twirl. Thus equipped, he might be taken for some heroic survivor of the great struggle.

The artist, pleased with the conception, repeated it with very slight variations in a portrait now at the Hermitage (No. 814), painted about 1630, and signed with the monogram. He shows us the same features, the same pose, almost the same costume. Two plumes adorn the cap, a black and yellow scarf is drawn over the gorget; the costume is further enriched by pearl ear-rings, and a heavy gold chain, from which hangs a medallion with a cross in relief. The portrait is better preserved than that at Amsterdam, and has the

¹ A replica of the Nantes portrait, mentioned by M. Durand-Gréville, is in the Tours Museum. It is probably an early copy, made perhaps in Rembrandt's studio. The touch is coarser and clumsier than in Dr. Bredius's panel, or that at Nantes, and an awkward *pentamento* on the right cheek puts the ascription to Rembrandt himself out of court.

same subtlety of execution. The grays are colder, their gradations more refined, and the shadows are more transparent. The type reappears in two pictures mentioned by Dr. Bode in his study on *The Rembrandts of the Liechtenstein Gallery*, published in the *Graphischen Künste*. One, almost a replica of the example in the Ryksmuseum, came from the sale of the Beresford-Hope collection



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.
(Mr. Chamberlain, of Brighton.)

in 1887; the other, a smaller picture, was in the possession of Mr. Martin Colnaghi at about the same period. Mr. Hofstede de Grote calls my attention to a third example, in the Pommersfelden collection, ascribed to Gerard Dou, and Dr. Bredius to a fourth belonging to Mr. Humphry Ward, the latter almost an exact reproduction of the etching of 1635, *First Oriental Head* (B. 286).¹ Another of Rembrandt's etchings, incorrectly described by Bartsch as *Philo*

the Jew (B. 321), bears an unmistakable likeness to a little panel which passed from the Tschager collection to the Innsbrück Museum. Both are, in fact, portraits of Rembrandt's father, and bear the usual signature, with the date 1630. Yet another, and certainly one of the best of these portraits of Rembrandt's father, I saw not long ago in the studio of M. Zorn, the well-known Swedish painter.² This again is almost an exact reproduction (reversed) of one of the etchings, the *Man's Head, full face*, signed with the monogram, and

¹ Mr. Humphry Ward tells me this picture is his no longer. It was taken from him "in part exchange" by M. Sedelmeyer.—F. W.

² This picture has since been bought by Dr. Bredius.

dated 1630 (B. 304). The sitter wears the same headdress, a black velvet skull-cap; the same costume, a reddish brown robe bordered with fur, relieved by a strip of white collar. The features are the same, and reproduced with great exactness; the eyes, encircled by red lines, have the same piercing expression. The figure is a bust, rather less than life-size, seen three-quarters in profile; the light, falling upon it from the left, leaves the right side completely in shadow. The frank and dexterous modelling is carried out in a rich impasto, handled with great delicacy and knowledge of form; the treatment of the brown fur, gray beard, and moustache is very spirited; and the neutral gray of the shadows throws the brilliant lights into strong relief.¹ In M. Habich's remarkable collection at Cassel,² there is a head of the same person, almost life-size, modelled with extraordinary mastery. The composition is broader in this example, and the



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.
 (Dr. Bredius.)

impasto more loaded. We may close the list with an oval panel in the Rotterdam Museum, nearly life-size ($28\frac{3}{4} \times 22\frac{1}{8}$ inches), in which we note the same thin face the same pale complexion, the same piercing eyes and wrinkled throat. In this example the head-dress is Oriental in style, a scarf being twisted turban-wise beneath the

¹ The skull-cap was an afterthought, added, no doubt, to conceal the bald head, and the impasto beneath is very apparent.

² Now dispersed.

black biretta. The picture (No. 353) is catalogued as the work, not of Rembrandt, but of Joris van Vliet, who, as far as we know, was not a painter; but the initial R, and part of a date .63. (1630) are decipherable in the background.

The attribution of this picture, and of the little panel at Nantes, to Van Vliet, is explained by the fact that a reproduction of the former is found among the engraver's works (B. 24) and that the same model re-appears in another of Van Vliet's plates (B. 20). He also figures repeatedly in the works of Lievens (B. 32 and 33) and is introduced among the spectators to the left of the composition, in a *Raising of Lazarus* by that master (B. 3). The head by Gerard Dou in the Cassel Museum, already mentioned, was evidently painted in Rembrandt's studio, and under his supervision, for the arrangement and costume are identical with those of the portraits in the Ryksmuseum and the Hermitage, save that the feather in the black head-dress is blue, and that a blue scarf is knotted across the steel gorget. Gerard Dou made further use of the type for the operator in his picture of *The Dentist* in the Louvre.¹

It is natural to suppose that those studies of himself, where Rembrandt was both painter and model, were made in private. We find no trace of them in the *œuvre* of his fellow-workers of this period. It was not till later, in 1634, that Van Vliet reproduced the little portrait of Rembrandt in the Cassel Museum. His plate is a reversed copy, marked by the somewhat truculent vigour that characterises his work. In an early picture, now in Sir Francis Cook's collection at Richmond, Gerard Dou represented his master with palette and maul-stick, putting the finishing touches to a work on the easel before him. Rembrandt, in his turn, painted a portrait of Gerard Dou, if, as we believe, Dou was his model for the head of a beardless youth in the Windsor collection, signed with his initials, and dated 1631. Be this as it may, the sitter was evidently an intimate of the household, to judge by the fanciful costume with which Rembrandt bedecked him; a turban formed of a scarf

¹ Rembrandt's father was also the model for the *Money-Changer* at Berlin.

entwined with pearls, a doublet with gold-embroidered collar, and a long chain set with precious stones. The light falls full on the face, where the loaded impasto of the high tones is opposed to very transparent shadows. The features and apparent age of the sitter alike point to Gerard Dou.

Other models sat for Rembrandt and Lievens who must have been members of their circle. Among these is an old man frequently painted by Lievens, of whose head Rembrandt made several drawings, and who was the subject of various plates in 1630 and 1631 (B. Nos. 260, 290, 291, 309, 315 and 325). The master introduced this person, probably a relative of his own, in several of his pictures, such as the *Lot and his Daughters* and the *Baptism of the Eunuch*. He was also the model for one of the *Philosophers* in the Louvre. Other types of which both artists made use for their work with the graver were: a venerable-looking old woman (Rembrandt: B. Nos. 354 and 358 to 360; Lievens: B. No. 55) and a man from whom Rembrandt painted the physician in his *Death of the Virgin* (B. 305) and who also appears in a plate by Lievens (B. 50).

The list might be further extended, but we have sufficiently shown how numerous were the studies made in common. Among the band of fellow-workers, Rembrandt and Lievens were the two whose affinities were strongest. Both were studious, imaginative, bent on high achievements in their art. They had shown a like precocity, a like industry, and Houbraken, whose testimony as to Rembrandt's ardour we have already quoted, further records that Lievens, on his return to his native city, set to work "with such zeal and success that connoisseurs were amazed at his talent." From a comparison of their works at this period, we learn that they not only worked together from the same model, but often treated the same subjects, each endeavouring to solve the same problem of chiaroscuro or technique. Thus, in several studies of heads painted by Lievens at this time, we find him drawing the hair or beard in the moist paint with the butt-end of the brush, after the manner of Rembrandt.

Rembrandt's relations with Gerard Dou had less of familiarity and

equality. He was Dou's senior and his master; the pupil listened respectfully to his instructions, inclining more and more, however, to that minute finish, which gradually became his chief preoccupation. But in these early days he had not lost all breadth in his handling, and he was a conscientious student of his craft. Van Vliet was greatly inferior to all three. He was an engraver exclusively; and when he attempted to create, he showed an abnormal heaviness, vulgarity,



FIGURE OF THE LADY OF THE LAMPS.
Engraved by Van Vliet, in 1655, after a picture by Rembrandt.

inaccuracy, and lack of taste. He was a mere bungling imitator of his contemporaries, and of his translations it may truly be said that they were so many treasons against his friends. Incompetent as he was, however, we owe something to the industry with which he reproduced and disseminated the works of Lievens and Rembrandt. He engraved several of Lievens' pictures, among others a *Jacob and Esau*, and a *Susanna*; we are

further indebted to him for our knowledge of several lost works of Rembrandt. Among certain studies of heads engraved by Van Vliet which bear Rembrandt's monogram with the legend *inventor*, we may instance one of a man (B. 21) laughing immoderately, and grimacing in a very inelegant fashion,¹ a *Man in Distress* (B. 22), of which we shall have more to say presently, a *Head of an Old Man* (B. 23), &c. Van Vliet's etchings have further preserved several more important works, all other

¹ This study is now decorated with the steel gages so often mentioned.

traces of which have disappeared. The interpreter's limitations make it impossible to appreciate the original beauties of execution; coarse as these reproductions are, however, they give some idea of style and composition, and thus have a certain claim to respect.

Three of these engravings are dated 1631, whence we may conclude that the originals were earlier by some little time. The inexperience displayed in their composition confirms this hypothesis. It is difficult to feel any very deep regret for the loss of *Lot and his Daughters*. The subject, though much in vogue at the time both in Holland and Flanders, is a revolting one, and was little suited to the genius of the painter, who rarely attempted such themes, and was never conspicuously successful in their treatment, even in his best days. He shows commendable reticence in dealing with



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.
(Habich Collection, Cassel.)

the unsavoury episode. Lot's daughters, two brazen wenches, are busily plying the old man with drink. He, brandishing the goblet he has just drained, sings lustily, his mouth wide open, his eyes half closed, with an air of great animation. Through the opening of the cave in which the fugitives have taken refuge, bearing with them one or two cherished possessions, the flames of Sodom are seen in the distance, and the outline of Lot's wife as a pillar of salt. There is nothing very attractive in all this,

and Van Vliet's reproduction no doubt exaggerates the vulgarity of the scene. A drawing by Rembrandt in the British Museum, very skilfully executed in red chalk, gives a better idea of the subject.

The *Baptism of the Eunuch* was another incident greatly in favour with the painters of the day. Lastman, not to mention many others, had twice painted it (Berlin Museum, No. 677; and Mannheim Museum, No. 113). It was a subject specially congenial to the *Italianisers*—one in which they were able, under pretext of local colour, to heap on all the gorgeous accessories of the Oriental convention they loved. Rembrandt was no whit behind them in this respect; he even borrowed several details from his predecessors. The laborious care bestowed on the *mise-en-scène* is manifest in the splendid trappings of the car, the rich dresses of the servants, the attire of the convert and his guards, the rank luxuriance of gourds and thistles in the foreground. The figures of the Ethiopian kneeling beside the pool, the apostle pouring water on his head, and the cavalier above them, are arranged in a perpendicular line, the effect of which is disastrous to the composition. The attitude of the horseman, and the thick legs, huge neck, and extraordinary head of his charger are no less grotesque. The sole elements of congruity are found in the saintly gravity of Philip, and the reverent piety of the eunuch. Some idea of the colour and execution of this picture may be gathered from several old copies, one of which belonged to Mr. Graham, of London, another to the Schwerin Museum (No. 856 in the Catalogue). Dr. Bode is even inclined to accept a replica in the Oldenburg Museum (No. 179 in the Catalogue) as the original. In the Oldenburg example the composition is reversed, whereas in the above copies it agrees with Van Vliet's engraving (B. 12). But this is really a presumption in favour of its authenticity, for Van Vliet never took the trouble to reverse the drawings he made for reproduction. There are notable differences, however, between the Oldenburg and Schwerin pictures, and between these and the engraving. The perfunctory execution of the Oldenburg example, its crudity of colour, the disregard for



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

harmony shown in its medley of blues, greens, reds and yellow, make us loth to accept an attribution which, in any case, does little honour to Rembrandt.¹

We may add that he returns to the subject in 1641, for one of his etchings (B. 98), in which he introduces several details of the earlier work. Without eliminating the fantastic element altogether, he successfully modifies the composition by a freer and more picturesque arrangement, and is careful to preserve the expressions of the apostle and the eunuch.

As far as we can judge from Van Vliet's engravings, the *Baptism of the Eunuch* and the *Lot and his Daughters* were painted at the outset of Rembrandt's career, about 1628—1629. Both show marked analogies with the *Samson and Delilah* of 1628. The *St. Jerome at Prayer* was no doubt later; the execution is freer and more delicate; before painting the picture, Rembrandt made a careful study of the kneeling saint in a beautiful red chalk drawing, now in the Louvre.² The hermit, prostrate before a crucifix, is absorbed in prayer. A brilliant light falls upon his figure. Some books, an hour-glass, a mat, a gourd, and a cardinal's hat are placed beside him. To the right, an animal with a curious head, more like a huge cat than a lion, crouches at his feet. A vine laden with grapes, springing from amidst a cluster of thistles in the background, spreads its tendrils along the brick wall of the cell. Van Vliet's etching, the best of all his works, attests the minute finish of the original, especially in the numerous accessories. We recognise the master of Gerard Dou in this picture, and the affiliation is formally demonstrated by a *Hermit* in the Dresden Gallery (No. 171 in the Catalogue). The pupil here reproduces the *St. Jerome* almost exactly, contenting himself with a slight modification of the pose and type. Refining upon his master's lessons, Dou has carried elaboration to its extremest limit. In the Dresden picture,

¹ Another version of the *Baptism of the Eunuch*, formerly in the Mocenigo Gallery at Venice, now in Count Tolstoi's collection at Odessa, once passed for the original. Mr. Somoff, Director of the Hermitage, kindly informs me that this so-called replica is a copy.

² Here again the drawing shows that Van Vliet's plate reverses the composition. An early copy of the *St. Jerome*, bought by the Berlin Gallery in the Suermondt collection, has been passed on to the Museum of Aix-la-Chapelle

each strand of the mat is separately painted ; the minute veinings of the bluish thistle foliage, along which a snail has left its silvery track, are carefully noted, and the wings of a tiny butterfly that has strayed into the cave are gay with innumerable tints. The harsh cold colour adds to the dryness of the pitiless execution, and brings out the poverty of all this detail, on which Dou dwells with a satisfaction that challenges admiration of his patient puerility. What was a mere means

for the careful study of nature with the master, has become the essential element of the pupil's art.

We may form some idea of the *St. Jerome* from a fine work in excellent condition belonging to Count S. Stroganoff of St. Petersburg. It bears Rembrandt's monogram, and the date 1630. The subject is somewhat enigmatical. We recognise the same old man with the white beard who figures in the *Lot and his Daughters*, and in so many of



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.

1630 (B. 229).

the young master's plates. As in the *Lot*, the scene is a cave ; on the horizon is a town in flames, with monuments, a great stair-case, the outline of a domed temple, and, in the middle distance, houses, from which the inhabitants are flying at their utmost speed. But in place of the jovial old wine-bibber of the former picture, we have a venerable man, sitting in meditative solitude. By his side are various costly possessions, which he has no doubt snatched from imminent pillage—a purple velvet cover embroidered with gold, and a golden bowl and ewer richly chased. He seems to have fled in haste, for his feet are bare. Resting his head on his right hand, he sits lost in thought, uncertain how to act. His left hand is laid on a large folio, which Rembrandt takes care to inform us is the Bible. The episode is therefore taken from the Scriptures ; but what is it, and who is the person

represented? Like Dr. Bode, we must be content to ask the question, without offering a solution. The picture is a very attractive one,



BAPTISM OF THE EUNUCH.

(Engraved by J. van Vleit, in 1631, after a picture by Rembrandt.)

and the problematical nature of the theme adds to its interest. The impasto is moderately fat in the lights, the touch precise and mellow,

light and easy, the colour most harmonious. The delicately modelled head of the old man is full of expression, and the neutral lilac tones of his furred robe are well attuned to the pale green of his tunic. These cool tones relieve the russet tints of the grotto walls with its climbing plants, and the general harmony is full of distinction. A drawing in red chalk at the Hermitage shows that Rembrandt made careful preparation for this picture. It is marked by the same easy elegance that distinguishes the *St. Jerome* drawing, and belongs to about the same period.

Landscape, as we have seen, plays but a secondary part in the works of Rembrandt so far. The picture in which it has figured most prominently hitherto is the *Baptism of the Eunuch*, where its feebleness certainly betrays the inadequacy of the master's knowledge. The plants in the foreground are taken from separate studies of their various species, and grouped together in a manner far from convincing. They are excrescences in the composition, and add but little to its beauty. Rembrandt, who was anxious to utilise these studies, introduces them again, with even less propriety, in his *St. Jerome*. But he probably recognised their incongruity, and his own ineptitude for their successful treatment as yet, and so abandoned them, for a time at least. Accustomed to depend on Nature for his inspiration, he needed her guidance at every turn, and was lost without her. When he attempted to stand alone, he had little reason to pride himself on the result. At a later period he made elaborate studies of lions in every variety of attitude, but his powers were severely taxed in the rendering of *St. Jerome's* attendant beast. He never specially distinguished himself in the painting of horses; but neither did he ever render them with such grotesque absurdity as in the *Baptism of the Eunuch*. It was essential to him to have his models always at hand, as far as possible, and as, after the fashion of the day, he loved Oriental themes, he tried to surround himself with the accessories on which he relied for local colour. His slender earnings were expended in their purchase; the collector's passion no less than the desire for aids to his art, impelled him to add perpetually to his collections. He loved to

adorn his Scriptural models with gewgaws from his wardrobes, and to furnish the interiors in which he set them from his own store-rooms.

From this time forward, we shall repeatedly find in his pictures and etchings, and in those of his fellow-workers, accessories he had collected for use in the studio. Rich stuffs, gaily coloured scarves, a velvet cover embroidered with gold, a fur-lined mantle; or again, arms, a helmet, a shield, a huge two-handed sword, a quiver, a Javanese dagger, and the steel gorget we have so often mentioned; or jewels perhaps, and plate; a metal bowl and ewer, pearl ear-rings, bracelets, gold chains which he throws round the necks of models, or with which he fastens the plumes of their head-dresses. There are other articles too, less striking but not less useful; the mat, the rosary, the gourd and the hour-glass of *St. Jerome's* cell—the folios and parchments of *St. Paul's* dungeon, and of the *Money-Changer's* den.

With such accessories, as Dr. Bredius tells us, Rembrandt composed studies of still-life, something after the manner of those pieces technically known as *Vanitas*, which artists like Jan Davidsz de Heem and Pieter Potter were then painting in Leyden. The sober harmonies of such works pleased the men of letters, who hung them in their libraries. Rembrandt certainly painted some of these. We learn from Gerard Hoet's catalogues that at a sale which took place at Amsterdam, May 11, 1756, a *Vanitas* by Rembrandt—with a death's head, a globe and books—was sold for thirty-one florins. Eager for knowledge, the young painter also, no doubt, began to buy prints—those of Lucas van Leyden, for instance—and sets of Oriental costumes and landscapes, to serve him in his quest after local colour. It seems even more probable that he now acquired various pictures by living masters of Leyden, for in his inventory we shall find three works by J. Pynas, a *grisaille* by Simon de Vlieger, several landscapes by Jan Percellis, who had lately retired to Soeterwoede, near Leyden, where he died soon afterwards (1633), and a sea-piece by Percellis's brother-in-law, H. van Anthonissen. Such pictures were of no great value, and it was

possible to buy them for a few florins, either from the dealers, or at public auction. Rembrandt perhaps had friends among these artists. He may also have made the acquaintance of a landscape-painter more famous than any of these, one who may well have attracted him by a sincerity equal to his own, and a kindred pre-occupation with the problems of chiaroscuro. Van Goyen paid a visit to Leyden in 1631, and is very likely to have met his young *confrère* in the Swanenburch circle, having been himself the pupil of Isaac, the father of Rembrandt's first master.



OLD MAN WITH A LONG BEARD.
1631 (B. 260).



PEN DRAWING, HEIGHTENED WITH WASH.
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)

CHAPTER IV

REMBRANDT'S PRECOCIOUS FAME—HUYGENS'S ACCOUNT THEREOF—THE PICTURE OF 'JUDAS'—ETCHINGS OF THIS PERIOD: THE 'BEGGARS,' 'SAINT ANASTASIUS,' 'THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE,' AND THE 'HOLY FAMILY,' 1631.—REMBRANDT RESOLVES TO SETTLE AT AMSTERDAM—THE INFLUENCE OF HIS LIFE AT LEYDEN ON HIS DEVELOPMENT.



A BEGGAR, STANDING.
About 1631 (B. 169).

PATRONS of art were fairly numerous in Holland at this period. The recent publication of a series of notes made at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Arent van Buchel, an advocate of the Estates of Utrecht,¹ reveals many interesting details concerning the leading amateurs of Leyden (Boissens, the Burgomaster Booms, H. Hondius, H. Screvelius, Rector of the Faculty, the advocate Backer, etc.) and their

collections, in which the Flemings and the earlier Dutchmen, Lucas van Leyden, Heemskerck, Goltzius, C. Ketel, Bloemaert, etc., were largely represented. Such works must have had a special interest for Rembrandt, and we cannot doubt that he studied them profoundly. Buchel does not confine his remarks to pictures he saw at Leyden during the several visits he paid the city, in 1605, 1622 and 1628.

¹ Arent van Buchel's *Res Pictorie*, by G. van Ryn (*Oud-Holland*, v. p. 143).

He had diligently collected information touching the artists of his native country, either at first hand or through correspondents, and he seems to have projected a sequel to Van Mander's work. Among his abridged notices of contemporary painters, there is one, under the date of his last visit to Leyden (1628), which evidently refers to Rembrandt: *Molitoris etiam Leidensis filius magni fit, sed ante tempus*. In spite of the ambiguity of its Latin, the phrase sufficiently attests the precocious fame of the miller's son.¹ But a document discovered in March, 1891, not only gives full and convincing proof of Rembrandt's early celebrity, but restores to him one of the most important of his youthful works.

Dr. J. A. Worp, of Gröningen, while engaged on a new edition of the poems of C. Huygens, of which the Academy of Science at Amsterdam possesses several manuscripts, came upon an autobiography of the poet, ranging from about 1596 to 1614, at the end of one of the folios. It was composed probably between 1629 and 1631, and is written in that elegant and somewhat subtle Latin affected by Dutch scholars of the period.² In describing his education, a very elaborate one, Huygens enumerates the arts and sciences in which he had been instructed, and goes on to speak of contemporary artists he had known or admired in his youth. He dwells on the precocity of Rembrandt and of Lievens—"beardless, yet already famous"—both living contradictions of that doctrine of heredity which is not, it would seem, so modern as we suppose, but in which Huygens refuses to acquiesce. "One of these two youths is the son of a mere artisan, an embroiderer of hangings; the other is the son of a miller, but made of other flour than his father," he adds jestingly. "Such parentage makes their intelligence and talent seem indeed prodigious. Their masters were obscure and mediocre artists, for the modest

¹ Such, it seems to us, is the probable interpretation of the passage, though others have read it somewhat differently, as implying that the young artist undertook tasks beyond his actual powers. But neither the dimensions of Rembrandt's works, nor anything he had attempted hitherto, seem to authorise such a rendering.

² This autobiography, which consists of some one hundred and fifteen pages, is inserted in the volume catalogued as No. XLVIII., and entitled, *Prosa Anglica, Italica, Hispanica*, etc.

means of their parents could afford them no better instruction. . . . They have become what they are by sheer force of genius, and I am persuaded that had they been left entirely to themselves, they would have attained the same excellence to which their masters are now mistakenly supposed to have contributed. The elder of these two young men, the son of the embroiderer, is called Lievens ; the miller's son, Rembrandt. Both are beardless, and judging from their youthful faces and figures, are rather boys than young men." Huygens considers "Rembrandt to be Lievens's superior in intelligence and observation ; while Lievens, on the other hand, surpasses his companion in a certain nobility of treatment and grandeur of form. Dwelling perpetually, in his youthful ardour, on the sublime and magnificent, he is not content with actual dimensions, and attempts the colossal. Rembrandt, on the contrary, by pure force of talent, achieves a concentration in the more restricted field he chooses, such as we shall seek in vain in his *confrère's* grandiose compositions. I need cite nothing further in proof of my statement," adds Huygens, "than his picture of *Judas returning the Price of Betrayal to the High Priest*." And, passing over other details of this work, the author bases his admiration on "the central figure of Judas, beside himself, bewailing his crime, imploring the pardon he dares not hope for, his face a vision of horror, his hair in wild disorder, his clothes rent, his arms contorted, his hands pressed fiercely together. Prostrate on his knees, his whole body seems ravaged and convulsed by his hideous despair." Huygens goes on to contrast this figure with the amenities of classic creations, and in one of those oratorical flights dear to writers of his day, he defies Parrhasius, Apelles, the masters of all ages, to equal the expressive power displayed by "this Batavian, this miller, this stripling," and ends with an apostrophe full of the warmest encouragement to the young artist.

The document is a significant one, coming from such a man, and at that date. It explains Huygens's subsequent relations with Rembrandt, and the numerous commissions he gave the painter, after his nomination to the post of secretary to Prince Frederick Henry. Knowing how deeply interesting his discovery would be

to me, Mr. Worp, through the medium of our common friend, Dr. Bredius, immediately offered me the first-fruits of his discovery, a courtesy for which I here beg to thank him very heartily. He also inquired whether I knew the picture so highly praised by Huygens, all trace of which had been lost. By a curious chance, I had seen it two days before, in the collection of M. Haro, to whom it now belongs. The Rembrandtesque character of the composition,



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER IN AN EASTERN HEAD-DRESS.

1631 (B. 348).

chiaroscuro, and types had struck me at the first glance; but the want of experience betrayed in the distribution of light, and a certain clumsiness in the execution, would have made me hesitate to ascribe this work to the master, had not the figure of Judas claimed my attention. In this figure I recognised one I had often noticed, in turning over the works of Van Vliet, as bearing the inscription *Rembrandt inventor*, and the date

1634. The figure is reversed in the print, and engraved as a half-length. Referring to Bartsch's catalogue, where it bears the title *A Man in Distress*, and is numbered 22, I found the following note: "The editors of Gersaint's catalogue state, in reference to this print, that they had seen a fine picture by Rembrandt, representing Judas returning the thirty pieces of money to the Sanhedrim, and that the head of Judas is here reproduced by Van Vliet." I had therefore practically made up my mind as to the authenticity of the picture, when Mr. Worp's letter of a day later came to dispel any lingering doubts. Every detail

of M. Haro's *Judas* agrees with the description given by Huygens, a description evidently written in the presence of the picture itself. Smith includes the work in his catalogue (No. 90) and, though he had never seen it, describes it from an engraving made by Robert Dunkarton, the English engraver, when the picture was in the Fanshawe collection.¹ In spite of the blunders and corrections that strike the spectator at first sight, the work is a very characteristic one, and the figure of Judas justifies the admiration expressed by Huygens. Other dramatic features of this scene, a faithful transcript of the Gospel narrative, are the gesture of disgust with which the High Priest turns from the traitor, declining either to look at or listen to him, the indignation of the blue-robed dignitary above him, the scorn, anger or curiosity expressed by the remaining spectators. Several of the accessories we have noted in other works by the young master re-appear here: the embroidered mantle of the High Priest; the cuirass inlaid with gold which hangs from the drapery; the books and cover on the table, the intonations and somewhat laboured treatment of which mark the affinity between this picture and the *Money-Changer* of 1627. Huygens's text indicates 1628—1630 as the date of execution; he



REMBRANDT'S FATHER.
1631 (B. 263).

¹ Vosmaer, to whom we owe this information, had seen neither the original nor Dunkarton's engraving, for he supposed M. E. Galichon's fine Rembrandt drawing of the same subject to be a study for the picture. It is, however, of much later date, and the composition is radically different.

is confirmed by internal evidences such as the comparatively heavy and unskilful handling, the diffused light, and exaggerated gesture.

It is clear from Huygens's testimony, that the fame of Rembrandt had gradually spread among his fellow-citizens and throughout the neighbouring towns. Amateurs began to visit his studio. Houbraken, enlivening his narrative with gossip such as biographers of the day considered essential to their text, relates that a connoisseur from the Hague, to whom he had been introduced, bought one of his pictures for a hundred florins, a very considerable price for the work of so young an artist.¹ Encouraged by his first successes, Rembrandt worked with redoubled ardour, and the close of his sojourn at Leyden was marked by great productiveness.

Rembrandt's engraved work attests this fertility. He etched a large number of plates during this period, and their diversity of subject gives fresh proof of his artistic curiosity. Neglecting no opportunity for gleanings of knowledge, he found sources of interest in all about him, even in the most familiar scenes of humble life. The populace attracted him, and alike in market-place and suburb, workmen and peasants seemed to him worthy of his attention. Among people of low rank, manners are simpler, and conduct less artificial. Their gestures are franker, their attitudes and expressions more natural. It was among them that Lucas van Leyden had found his favourite models, and, like his famous predecessor, Rembrandt never wearied of studying them. He liked to live among the poor, and they abounded just then in his native country. Perpetual wars had brought ruin to thousands; and Europe was infested by hordes of beggars. We shall find in Rembrandt's inventory, under the heading *The Jerusalem of Callot, complete*, an entire set of the Lorraine engraver's works. It was he who showed Rembrandt the way in this branch of his art, and, following in his footsteps, the Dutch master immortalised the beggars and vagabonds who swarmed throughout the land. The struggle had been long and bitter in the Netherlands, and the miseries that ensued were terrible. The title *Beggars*, applied elsewhere only to the dregs of the popula-

¹ Vosmaer, anticipating M. Worp's discovery, remarks that the connoisseur was not improbably Huygens.

tion, had been claimed at one time by the whole nation, and used as a rallying-cry. Seizing on the epithet hurled at them in scorn, the rebels had bound it to them, covering it with glory, and had added a porringer and wallet to their arms in honour of the name under which they had won their freedom.

Holland was now free and peaceful, but distress was still widespread. The *Beggars* play a part as considerable in the *œuvre* of Rembrandt as in the history of his country. They form a category apart, and the etchings he dedicated to them nearly all date from this period of his youth. The infirm, the halt, the crooked, the crippled, follow one another in this portrait gallery of life's unfortunates, and the aspects in which the artist has drawn them are so true, so exact, and so enduring that many (B. Nos. 163, 164, 172, 174) might pass for life-studies from the needy loafers of our own streets. Every variety of type figures in the collection; the haggard and the corpulent, the drunken and the starving, the defiant and the lachrymose. In Callot's plates, poverty wears its rags so gallantly as to make them picturesque. In Rembrandt's, on the other hand, indigence has a less jovial mien. He painted squalor as he saw it—its abject types, its shapeless tatters. Later he turned these to account for the cripples and sufferers of every description he grouped about the healing Christ, amidst those crowds in which he did not shrink from the portrayal of every contrast and every deformity.

It was in no spirit of revolt against academic convention that the young master worked; an instinctive love of reality urged him on, almost unconsciously. It was a passion that led him at times into strange vagaries. Nothing repelled him; and his indiscreet graver reproduced much that civilised man agrees to ignore, the lowest functions of poor humanity (B. 189, 190) and even, it must be admitted, rollicking obscenities (B. 186 to 189), depicted with Rabelaisian freedom, and with all the fiery eagerness of youthful curiosity.¹ Many of his most ardent admirers have, with the best intentions, tried to conceal these aberrations of his genius by denying his authorship

¹ Scarcely "youthful," for three at least out of the seven "*sujets libres*" which Rembrandt executed are assigned to an even later period than that of his wife's death: the "freest" of them—called "*Ledikant*"—is dated 1646.—F. W.

of works for which they are loth to hold him responsible. The subject is an unpleasant one, but we must not pass it over in silence. We cannot exculpate Rembrandt, but it must be borne in mind that a certain coarseness of manners and conversation was universal at the period, even in good society, and that this was peculiarly the case in Holland. We need but recall the ribald allusions, the unconscious cynicism, that abound in the verse of popular poets, and in the works of the most grave and learned writers of the age. We must not judge Rembrandt by the standard of our own days. If at times he offends our taste, we may extend the same indulgence to him as to Shakespeare, remembering the unseemly words and outrageous jests the great dramatist has put into the mouths of his purest and most poetic heroines. Happily, these excesses occur in very few of the master's etchings, and hold an unimportant place in his *œuvre*. We, too, regret their existence; nor will we give them undue importance by further discussion.

The engravings of this period are marked by as great a variety in execution as in subject. Sometimes the artist plays, as it were, with the graver, covering his plate with mere scribbles, dashed off without any preliminary sketch. At others the work is carefully carried out with a fine point, and marked by the utmost facility and knowledge of effect. To this last category belong three little plates (B. 48, 51, 66) representing subjects from Scripture, in which Rembrandt has made use of many of the popular types he had collected. In spite of their small proportions, they foreshadow the more imposing works which were soon to follow. The *Presentation in the Temple* and the *Jesus among the Doctors* are both dated 1630, and the *Little Circumcision* must be of the same date, the dimensions and treatment being precisely similar. Full of extravagances and vulgarities as they are, they show a marked individuality. The impression of sincerity is so strong that the artist seems to have been an actual spectator of the scene he depicts. The subjects had been treated again and again. But Rembrandt, with no trace of effort or research, improvises features that give them a new character. Such creative touches are to be found in the felicitous grouping of the

figures in the *Circumcision*, the introduction of the staircase that stretches away in mysterious perspective to the sanctuary in the *Presentation*, and the amazement and confusion of the *Doctors* before the little Child whose simplicity confounds their boasted learning.

In his pictures his progress is even more strongly evidenced than in his etchings. The studies of heads dated 1630 show increasing breadth and freedom, as we note in the head of an old man with a white beard, wearing a black cap, and a double chain round his neck from which hangs a gold cross (Cassel Museum, No. 209 in the Catalogue). The modelling is franker, and the shadows warmer, so that the use of almost pure vermilion for the lines and wrinkles of the face produces no effect of exaggeration. Here again the hairs of the beard have been drawn in the paint with the butt-end of the brush.

The year 1631 was marked by an advance still more decisive, and was one of the most prolific in Rembrandt's busy career. In the *St. Anastasius* in the Stockholm Museum (No. 579), which bears this date, and the signature *Rembrandt. f. 1631.* we recognise the old man who figures so repeatedly in the etchings, and who reappears a little later as one of the *Philosophers* in the Louvre: refined of feature, bald and prominent of brow, with small eyes and a large white beard. The saint is seated near a window, in a lofty vaulted oratory, divided by an arcade from a flagged corridor beyond; against one of the uprights of this arcade is an altar of carved stone, and on it a crucifix set in a framework of small reddish marble columns



THE LITTLE CIRCUMCISION.

About 1630 (B, 48).

*Rembrandt. f. 1631.*REMBRANDT'S
SIGNATURE.

with gilded shafts and capitals. He rests his left hand on the arm of his chair, and reads devoutly from a great folio on the table. His dress is a red skull-cap and a long robe of that purple-gray tint so much in favour with the painter at this period. Its cool tones, repeated here and there in the pale sky beyond, the curtains of the arcade, and the pavement of the adjoining vestibule, are happily contrasted with the warm browns and yellows that pervade the picture. The harmony of these deliberately juxtaposed tints is very delicate. Contrary to the usual practice of novices, Rembrandt shows great reticence in his scheme of colour; he is content with what is little more than monochrome, and concentrates all his skill on chiaroscuro. The penumbra of the more strongly illuminated surfaces, and their reflections are rendered with absolute truth, and the execution, as befits the quiet tonality, is at once light and precise. The meditative attitude of the old man, the expression of his features, the light and stillness that surround him as he sits absorbed in meditation, make up a whole full of infinite sweetness and charm.

In striking contrast to this is the bold and powerful effect aimed at in the *Presentation in the Temple* of the Hague Museum, signed with Rembrandt's monogram and dated 1631.¹ It is the most highly finished picture of this epoch, and one of the best preserved. In execution and in the treatment of architecture it has marked analogies with the *St. Anastasius*, which no doubt preceded it. But the contrasts are franker, the colour less restrained, the light more concentrated. The theme is a familiar one. In the centre of

AL:1631

REMBRANDT'S
MONOGRAM.

a temple with gigantic columns, the Virgin and St. Joseph make their offering, and present the new-born Child before the Lord. Devoutly kneeling on the paved floor, they gaze tenderly at the Infant in the arms of Simeon, also on his knees beside them. Around them are the Prophetess Anna and other persons, and in front stands the High Priest, robed in a long violet cope, and

¹ The panel in its original state was not semi-circular at the top, as at present. A piece was added to make it match a picture by Gerard Dou, *The Young Mother*, also belonging to the Mauritshuis.



holding up his hands, as if in ecstasy at the scene. In the shadow of the steps that lead up to the sanctuary is a crowd of worshippers, spectators, and armed men. In the foreground to the right sit the doctors of the law, observant of the group. The impression is striking, even at a first glance, and becomes immeasurably stronger on closer examination, for everything combines to re-inforce the effect—notably the distribution of the light, the brilliant sunshine falling in strong relief on the main group, focused as it were on the radiant little face of the Infant Jesus—the vast proportions and majestic structure of the temple—the mysterious gloom, through which an uncertain light gleams here and there on the gilded capitals, on the decorations of the sacred vessels, and on the armour of the men of war ranged on the steps.

Oriental buildings, as depicted by Rembrandt's forerunners, were architectural monuments of a ponderous or grotesque type. In many instances, the master himself had been scarcely more happily inspired than others. But in this canvas his poetic sense of the picturesque is wedded to a purer and less fantastic taste. He is no less successful in suggesting the luxury of the East by means of the rich stuffs he spreads before us. The simple garb of the Virgin and St. Joseph, and the squalor of the two beggars beside them, emphasise the splendour of the High Priest, and of Simeon, whose heavy cymar seems to be woven of gold and gems. The execution is a miracle of subtlety and skill. Note how supreme a colourist has been at work upon the High Priest's cope! With what science is the violet carried through the lights and shadows, with what truth are the tones observed and rendered, with what scrupulous care is the general harmony preserved, in spite of the marvellous treatment of detail! In this work, which sums up as it were his whole previous experience, Rembrandt shows the most amazing grasp of all the resources of his art. But with him, this perfection of technique serves only to give a fuller value to his thought, and to add significance to the expression of his chosen theme. Herein lies the secret of his greatness, and of his superiority to his rivals. Later, in the full maturity of his genius,

he was to show a greater force and breadth, more freedom and spontaneity of invention, but in none of his after works did he conceive a figure more moving than this of the Virgin in its tender self-forgetfulness, nor one more venerable than the ancient Simeon, the embodied type of the sacred narrative, white-haired, majestic of mien, his face aglow with joy and faith. The aged servant has seen his long-expected Saviour! He holds Him in his arms, presses Him to his heart, and now that his hour has come, he can depart in peace!

It is evident that Rembrandt was already familiar with the Scriptures. They became a source of perpetual inspiration to him, and henceforth he had no need to imitate the versions of Biblical and Gospel themes given by his predecessors. Studying them at first hand, his mind was more and more attuned to their beauties, and, kindling as he read, he found the germs of countless subjects, which his creative genius reconstructed, giving them renewed vitality. Instinctively, he chose the most moving of such scenes, shedding fresh light upon them, and dwelling, with no touch of effort, on their less familiar aspects. The *Holy Family* in the Munich Pinacothek may be taken as a typical instance. The Italian painters, in their treatment of such subjects, had ever in view a nobility of type, their conception of which was due, partly to the naturally high ideal of beauty proper to a beautiful race, partly to the ultimate destination of their works, the church and the altar. But Rembrandt, approaching them from a more intimate standpoint, dwells mainly on their profoundly human aspects. As pictures were banished from the reformed churches, he painted for the Dutch homes of his contemporaries, and was anxious to appeal to them through feelings by which he had himself been deeply moved. The theme of his conception at Munich is the glorification of labour in an honest, industrious household. In this scene there is no question of Eastern splendour. The background is of the simplest description; the carpenter's tools are displayed in his humble room, and both in type and costume Mary and Joseph are represented as simple working folks. The Babe, whom Mary has just fed from her breast, has fallen asleep on her lap. She holds His little naked feet in her hand, and

Joseph, bending over Him, and holding his breath as if fearing to wake Him, has paused in his work for a moment, to gaze at the tiny creature, the object of their joint love and care.

Rembrandt seems to have enshrined the memory of his own happy childhood in this gracious composition. The Virgin was perhaps drawn from his sister, or at least from some member of the household, for the type recurs in several of the master's other works—the small nose and eyes, the pale complexion, the fair hair drawn back from a high, and somewhat prominent brow. We recognise them in the Virgin of the *Presentation*, in one of *Lot's Daughters*, and in various other pictures. The same model seems to have sat for a study of a head, No. 591 in the Stockholm Museum, catalogued as the *Portrait of a Young Girl*, and formerly ascribed to Fer-



HOLY FAMILY.
(1631) Munich Pinacothek.

dinand Bol. I was struck by the likeness at the first glance, and was pleased to find my opinion confirmed by the learned Director of the Museum, Mr. Goethe, who classifies the work as of the "School of Rembrandt." It might even be attributed to the master himself with some show of probability, and, if indeed by him, was one of his earliest works. The naïve and somewhat timid handling recalls that of his first essays, and I recognised the same cold and rather hard

shadows, the same delicate modelling of the nose and forehead, the same gray tonality I had noted but a few days before in the portraits of this period in the Cassel and Gotha Museums.

Though the *Holy Family* of Munich bears the date 1631, its breadth of conception and freedom of handling distinguish it essentially from the *St. Anastasius* and the *Presentation in the Temple*. It is on a much larger scale ($76 \times 51\frac{1}{2}$ inches) than the earlier works, but the increase in size is not sufficient to account for the notable difference in execution. The painter, renouncing that minute finish he had used with so much success in former pictures, seems to have determined on a larger and bolder manner. The beauties of the *Holy Family* are tempered, however, by certain defects. The contrast of light and shadow is abrupt and violent; the outlines slightly woolly, and the brushing staccato and uneven. The picture must have been painted just before Rembrandt's departure from Leyden, or just after his establishment in Amsterdam, and the traces of haste in the execution are easily accounted for in either case. A marked advance is evident, nevertheless, both in the composition and in the greater freedom of handling. In common with Messrs. Bredius and H. Riegel,¹ we join issue against a criticism of Vosmaer's, which marks a curious lapse from his usual circumspection. It is surely some idiosyncrasy of the Dutch writer's that makes him see a satiric intention in the attitude of Joseph: "discreet and insignificant, as becomes his dismal part in the drama, he stands in the shade, and bending forward, gazes furtively at the offspring of his wife and his God."² The whole sentiment, not only of this picture, but of Rembrandt's entire *œuvre*, is opposed to such a reading. He repeated the subject more than once, and there seems to us no doubt of the absolute singleness of mind with which he approached it. We may, on the other hand, find some grounds for wonder in his predilection for themes no longer in vogue among his brother artists, such as episodes from the life and death of the Virgin.³

¹ W. Bode, *Studien zur Geschichte der holländischen Malerei*, p. 391; and H. Riegel, *Beiträge zur niederländischen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. i. p. 74.

² Vosmaer, *Rembrandt*, p. 105.

³ Notably in his etchings (B. 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63 and 99). The *Virgin and*

But there are numerous evidences among Rembrandt's works of a broad tolerance, which led him to disregard sectarian prejudices in his choice of religious subjects. Greater prudence in this respect would have been excusable enough, especially at Leyden, where Calvinism of the most rigid type prevailed, and where the fanaticism from which no religious party of the day was free often culminated in violence and persecution. One of Rembrandt's most illustrious compatriots, Caspar van Baerle (Barlæus), a sometime student of the University, who had returned to Leyden in 1612 as Professor of Logic, esteemed himself happy in having escaped from spiritual bondage by migration to Amsterdam, where he longed "to find himself on freer soil."¹

Leyden had become pre-eminently a city of scholars and theologians, in which Rembrandt could no longer hope for such encouragement as awaited him at Amsterdam. The latter was now the chief art centre of the country, and painters were flocking thither from every side. It was not alone that they found a better market for their works; emulation quickened their powers, and their talents were stimulated by the interchange of ideas. Dr. Bredius has recently discovered a census of the town of Leyden, dated March, 1631, in which the name of "Rembrandt Harmensz, painter" still figures as an inhabitant. But we know from Orlers that his works were by this time in high favour among the citizens of Amsterdam, and that he had numerous commissions for pictures and portraits from them. His journeys to Amsterdam were now very frequent, and it seems probable that on these occasions he lodged with an art-dealer, named Hendrick van Uylenborch, with whom he formed a friendship that lasted many years. It is further probable that Uylenborch was the medium through whom he acquired some of the studio properties described in a previous chapter. He proved his confidence in the dealer by advancing him a sum of 1000 florins, and in a deed attested in the presence of an Amsterdam notary, June 20, 1631, Hendrick agrees to repay the loan in a year, on

Infant Christ on Clouds (B. 61) is, in fact, an apotheosis of the Virgin, conceived rather in the spirit of a Catholic than of a Protestant painter.

¹ *Anhelo ad liberioris soli aulam*, he wrote on January 9th, 1631, to his friend, Jan Uytenbogaerd, of whom Rembrandt engraved a fine portrait some years later. (*Oud-Holland*, vol. iv. p. 260).

condition that he should be served with a three months' notice of claim.¹

Though Rembrandt could paint pictures in his own studio for his patrons at Amsterdam, constant journeys to and fro were necessitated by his increasing practice as a portrait-painter. This inconvenience made him at last decide on a change of domicile. He had no family duties to keep him in Leyden. His mother, now his first consideration, and the various other members of his circle, were all sufficiently provided for. His eldest brother could do no work, having been injured by an accident. But an annuity of 125 florins had been secured to him by his parents, so early as March, 1621. The next brother, Adriaen, had given up his original trade of shoemaking to take over the malt-mill on the death of his father (April 27, 1630). The business seems eventually to have fallen off somewhat in his hands. A third, Willem, was to share with his brother in the mill, and Lisbeth, the painter's sister, was unmarried, and free to devote herself to her mother. The family was in easy circumstances, and though Rembrandt, no doubt, felt the parting, he knew there was no obligation on him to remain. His friends in Amsterdam had long urged him to settle among them, and to this step he finally made up his mind either in the middle or towards the end of 1631.

Rembrandt's departure broke up the band of young artists who had clustered round him, for many years, working probably in his studio. Lievens quitted Leyden at about the same date. He had been hardly less successful than his friend. A picture he had painted this same year had attracted great attention. This was a life-size study of a man, in a black biretta, fantastically dressed, reading by a peat fire. The costume and the illumination seem to indicate that the work was either inspired by Rembrandt, or carried out under his advice. The Prince of Orange bought it, and presented it to the English ambassador. The ambassador, in his turn, gave it to the English king, and so greatly was it admired, that Lievens was invited to England, where he remained for three years, finding great

¹ Bredius and De Roever: *Rembrandt, Nieuwe Bydragen* (Oud-Holland, v.).

favour at Court, and among the nobility. Returning to Antwerp, he married the daughter of the sculptor Michel Colyns. His manner gradually assimilated more and more to that of the Flemish school. In after years he met his former fellow-student on several occasions at Amsterdam, and kept up the practice of exchanging prints with him. Several of his works, as we shall find, were among the treasures of Rembrandt's

studio.¹ Lievens was much appreciated by his contemporaries, and was celebrated by various poets of his day. In 1640 the corporation commissioned him to paint a *Continnence of Scipio* at 1500 florins. It still retains its position above one of the fire-places in the Town Hall. At the request of Prince Frederick Henry's widow, he was also employed on the decorations of the *Huis ten Bosch*, near the Hague. Notwithstanding these

early successes, Lievens, like Rembrandt, ended his days in poverty. He died a bankrupt, his goods having been previously seized and sold at auction by his creditors.

Gerard Dou, on the other hand, had now achieved a popularity that years only tended to increase. The demand for his works grew steadily, and they fetched correspondingly high prices, the attraction lying less in their actual merit than in the marvellous finish to which



STUDY IN BLACK CHALK.
(King of Saxony's Collection.)

¹ Five of Lievens' works are included in the inventory of Rembrandt's effects—a *Raising of Lazarus*, two landscapes, a *Hermit*, and an *Abraham's Sacrifice*.

he gradually inclined more and more. After the departure of Rembrandt, the passion for minute execution gained complete mastery over his pupil, and Dou became the head of that school of genre-painters at Leyden, whose works, hard, dry, and insignificant as they were, enjoyed such extraordinary vogue. Left to himself, Van Vliet's decline would have been even more signal than that of Dou, but he followed Rembrandt to Amsterdam, where he executed a considerable number of plates from the master's pictures. In these, which were doubtless carried out under Rembrandt's direction, he shows a certain degree of talent, all traces of which disappear, however, when he works from his own designs. His original plates are all disfigured by the violent contrasts, coarse drawing, and vulgar expression which sufficiently explain the complete neglect of his works by modern connoisseurs.

By quitting the home circle to settle at Amsterdam, Rembrandt secured a wider sphere for his genius, and one more suitable to his artistic powers. But the years spent at Leyden had been fruitful, and their influence was considerable throughout his career. As his talent developed there had grown up in him that love of Nature which clung to him all his life. He had learnt to look at her with his own eyes, and to render her by very characteristic methods. Yet one so full of eager curiosity as he, must have been strongly tempted to yield to the current that bore so many of his contemporaries to Italy—that Italy whose glory and whose masterpieces drew the artist-world to her in crowds. But he had been proof against the seductions spread before him by travellers' tales. He had dwelt among his own people, instead of seeking instruction abroad, as so many of his brethren had done, and, even in his own country, he had lived somewhat alone, a meditative student of his art. He had struck out a path at his own peril, adopting methods peculiar to himself, satisfied with the models that lay ready to his hand: himself, his parents, and his relatives. His studies had furnished his memory and filled his portfolios with an infinite variety of types, ready for use in future compositions. He had set himself to discover the essential notes of a diversity of passions in his own mobile features.

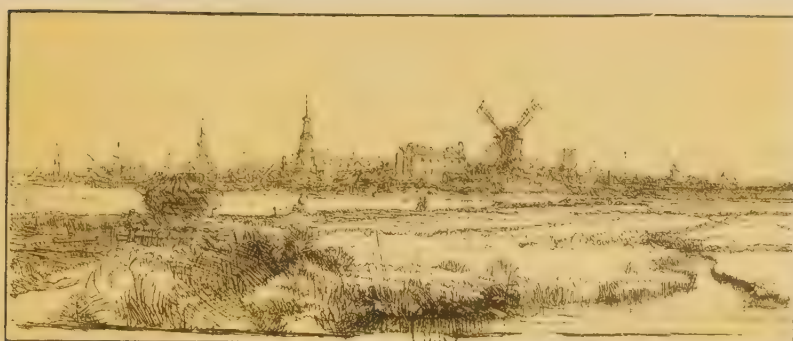
But these formed only a part of his artistic preoccupations. He too had been fascinated by those problems of illumination which had attracted some of his predecessors. But, not content with the more obvious contrasts they had noted, he had gone further, and had successfully reproduced the play of those more delicate values, the relation of those less sharply defined contrasts, and of that insensible merging of light in shadow which constitute the mystery of chiaroscuro. He had divined the vast possibilities of such a science. Drawing became in his hands more than a somewhat abstract method of suggesting objects by means of a rigid and continuous system of delimitation. He had made it a vehicle for extraordinary vivacity of modelling, for expressing the surfaces of forms by obscuring their contours in part, only to bring out their essential features more forcibly. Discoveries still more unexpected and personal were reserved for him in connection with the uses of chiaroscuro in composition. No element of the picturesque lends itself to greater diversity of combinations, nor is any more admirably adapted to the expression of emotion, from the deepest to the most fleeting. Thus, by restricting or extending the field of light at pleasure, he was enabled to emphasise the characteristic features of a subject, and to subordinate its details according to their relative importance, or helpfulness to the general harmony. So far as we have yet followed him, the young master had confined himself to simple and direct experiments. But he was aware that a new world, rich in potential discoveries, was opening out before him. He learnt by degrees to satisfy the vague yearnings of his spirit, without loss of the material support afforded him by a keen study of nature. His determination of character urged him forward on the road he had chosen, and he kept steadily on his course to the end.

We have seen that this period of voluntary isolation exercised a decisive influence on the life he had now resolved to dedicate solely to his art. Nothing, he determined, should henceforth come between him and the longed-for goal. He would give himself up wholly to his studies. As his love of seclusion grew on him, he became increasingly reluctant to leave his own hearth. He therefore began to fill his home with such things as might increase his knowledge, and

further his work. His marked originality and strength of will were such that he had little to fear from the seductions that awaited him in a new centre. The transformation that had taken place in his character had left its marks on his face. In an etching of 1631 (B. 7), one of his numerous portraits of himself, we find no vestige of that youthful simplicity, the grace of which charms us in the Hague portrait. The features are more marked, the expression more resolute, the face, broader and more masculine, breathes strength and confidence in every line. The costume and attitude enforce this impression. His hand on his hip, his curling hair escaping from under his hat, draped in a rich cloak of fur-lined damask with a collar of pleated lace, his bearing is that of a man who knows his own value, and will not falter in his life-march. Seven years ago he quitted Amsterdam a novice ; he comes back a Master.



REMBRANDT WITH FRIZZLED HAIR.
About 1631 (B. 8).



[VIEW OF AMSTERDAM.
About 1640 (B. 210).

CHAPTER V

AMSTERDAM TOWARDS THE YEAR 1631—HER GROWING TRADE AND PROSPERITY—
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY—THE SPIRIT OF TOLERANCE—CHARITIES—
THE LITERARY MOVEMENT—THE ART AND TASTE OF THE DAY—DUTCH HOME-LIFE.



SMALL GROTESQUE HEAD.
About 1632 (B. 327).

THE situation of Amsterdam, unfurling herself fan-wise along the coast, her vast harbour, her concentric canal system, opening up communication throughout the land, seem to mark her out for a great centre of international commerce. Yet this Venice of the North had risen from small beginnings, and her prosperity was won by dint of persistent struggles against difficulties of every kind. Her development from a straggling fisher-hamlet, scattered over the islets formed by the alluvial deposits of the Amstel, is a significant testimony to that intelligent perseverance and heroic tenacity which ensured the existence, preservation, and greatness of Holland.

By the year 1631, the date at which Rembrandt took up his abode in the city, Amsterdam had risen to considerable importance. A number of emigrants from Antwerp and Flanders had been cordially

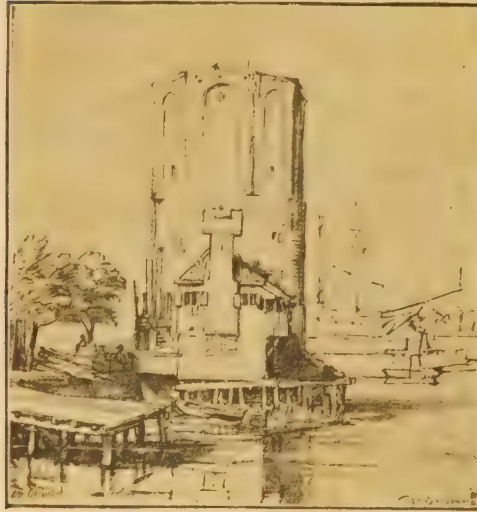
received by the inhabitants, and turning their energy and business knowledge to good account, had become useful and prominent members of the community. More fortunate than some of her sister-cities, Amsterdam had escaped those horrors of war which had devastated Alkmaar, Leyden and Haarlem. She had temporised for a considerable time before finally throwing in her lot with the States General in 1578, and having dismissed the Spanish clergy and magistrature practically without bloodshed, she quietly awaited the issue of the struggle behind the shelter of her dykes. But she had contributed actively to the success of the naval operations. Fleets were built at Amsterdam, which sailed from her harbour to assert the Dutch supremacy at sea, and to win immortal fame for her hardy sailors, admirals, and colonists. Among her navigators and adventurers were heroes such as J. van Heemskerk, Van der Does, Linschoten, Gerrit de Veer, Barentsz, Pieter Hein, Van Tromp, the De Ruyters, Jan Pietersz Coen, and his lieutenant Pieter van den Broeck, the founder of Batavia. A period of comparative security, following on the long contest, gave opportunities for the extension of commerce, and the acquisition of foreign territory. On April 2, 1595, four vessels set sail for the East Indies from Amsterdam. They were the first Dutch ships that had approached those shores. Two years later, three returned, leaving behind them settlements and counting-houses in latitudes to which none but the Portuguese had penetrated hitherto. Emboldened by these successes, ship-owners equipped other vessels. Various independent companies were formed, and amalgamating in 1602, became the great East India Company. The foundation of the West India Company in 1621 gave a fresh impetus to the trade of Holland. Half the mercantile marine of the world sailed under her flag, and her ships were found in every sea. From Java, Borneo, and Brazil her vessels came laden with coffee, spices, rare woods, plants, animals, and precious merchandise of every sort, which she distributed among the nations of Europe. As commerce developed, the facilities for barter increased, and banks were founded to aid the circulation of funds. Money poured steadily into Amsterdam; her Bourse was a centre of very lucrative financial operations, regulating the rate of

exchange throughout the world. Under conditions such as these, the need for exact information as to politics, the markets, and other matters of public interest became evident. Journalism sprang into being; and the *Gazette of Holland*, circulating throughout Europe, inaugurated the power of the periodical press.

Amsterdam was the heart of such energy and development as has seldom been witnessed in the history of nations. Strangers were deeply impressed by its activity, as Descartes, whose position gave him every opportunity for observation, duly records. The philosopher, as is well known, visited Holland for the first time in 1617, and afterwards lived there for ten years. His first sojourn, then, was at Amsterdam, from 1629 to 1632. Delighted with the facilities afforded him for his studies, he lived in absolute retirement, giving himself up to abstruse speculation and scientific research. Anatomy occupied him for a whole winter, and his butcher furnished him with portions of animals "to dissect at leisure." On other occasions he made friends with the manufacturers of spectacle-glasses, and devoted himself to the study of optics. He exchanged ideas with *savants* on the subject of acoustics, or collected seeds of exotics from the botanical gardens of the neighbouring Universities for transmission to France.

It was an ideal retreat for an inquirer of Descartes's tastes, and the bustling life around him made his seclusion all the more pleasurable. In a letter to M. de Balzac, dated May 5, 1631, he expresses his amazement at the scene of which he was a spectator. "In this vast city, where I am the only man not engaged in trade, every one is so busy money-making, that I might spend my whole life in complete solitude." He extols the advantages and resources of his domicile, and adds, in further evidence of his appreciation: "Seeing how pleasant it is to watch the growth of fruits in our orchards, can you not conceive the interest with which one hails the arrival of ships freighted with all the rarities of Europe, and all the treasures of the Indies? In what other country in the world are both necessary commodities and curious merchandise so readily obtainable as here? Where else can one enjoy such perfect liberty?" Returning to the subject six

years later in his *Discourse on Method*, he congratulates himself afresh : "Lost in the crowd of a great and active people, so busy with their own affairs that they have little curiosity as to those of their neighbours, I have found it possible to live the life of a hermit, while enjoying all the resources of the most populous cities."¹ Forty years later, Spinoza, who was nevertheless destined to suffer from



THE MONTALEAN TOWER.
(Pen drawing, Heseltine Collection.)

the bigotry of his fellow-townsmen, paid a like tribute to Amsterdam : "a city in the heyday of her prosperity, the admired of every nation . . . where all, no matter what their creed or country, live together in perfect unity."²

As her wealth increased, Amsterdam was gradually transformed.³ Like most mediæval towns, she had found it necessary to prepare for attack by circumvallation. But new exigencies arose with the

development of her commerce. Instead of demolishing the ancient gates and towers of the *enceinte* which successive extensions of the boundaries in 1585, 1593, 1609 and 1612 had brought within the city, the municipal architect, Hendrick de Keyser, utilised them as *entrepôts*, or offices for the Customs and other administrative functions. In adapting them to new requirements, he practically restricted himself

¹ *Discours sur la Méthode*, part iii.

² Spinoza : *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, c. xx.

³ For a detailed account of these changes, see G. Gallard's admirable work, *Geschichte der holländischen Baukunst und Bildnerei*, 1890. For information as to the manners and literature of the period, two recently published books may also be consulted : *Het Land van Rembrandt*, by Busken-Huet, 3 vols. 8vo., Haarlem, 1886 ; and *Geschichte der niederländischen Litteratur*, by L. Schneider, 1 vol. Leipzig, 1888.

to the introduction of a scheme of decoration more in accordance with prevailing taste. The Montalban Tower was thus modified in 1606, and the Haarlem Gate in 1615. In the one, the Mint was established in 1619; the other was used for the packing of herrings. The St. Anthony's Gate became the Standard Weights bureau, and its three flanking towers were assigned to the Guilds of painters, tailors, and surgeons respectively, for their periodical meetings. Such adaptations served a double end. They preserved ancient relics, and saved the expense of new buildings. The same



VIEW OF THE ZUYDERKERK.
(Facsimile of a contemporary print.)

practical sentiment governed the transformation of disused Catholic churches and cloisters into temples of the reformed faith. Buildings specially designed for the new worship also rose in various quarters. They were generally plain rectangular halls of uniform construction, crowned by a belfry. Such were the Zuyderkerk, on the south-east, built between 1607 and 1614; the Noorderkerk, its interior in the form of a Greek cross, with a pulpit in the centre, begun in 1620, and finished three years later; and the Westerkerk, a three-aisled basilica with a transept, the building of which occupied eighteen years—from 1620 to 1638.

In addition to these public buildings, a large number of private dwellings in every style of architecture had risen to modify the original aspect of the city. If treasure flowed abundantly into Amsterdam coffers, it was spent no less lavishly. The merchant princes, after amassing their great fortunes, were, like their prototypes in Venice and Florence, ambitious to distinguish themselves by the refinement of their tastes. Many of them were leaders of the intellectual movement; they dabbled in letters, and became patrons of art. On questions of public polity they brought to bear the same honourable intelligence that had marked their business transactions. A deep sense of solidarity united all classes in labours for the common weal. Municipal authority was no exclusive appanage of patrician birth; it was open to all whose merits claimed the suffrages of their fellow-citizens.

The instinctive leaning of this community towards wisdom and sobriety of conduct is discernible in every manifestation of its energies. Its exercise of reason was reinforced by a lofty moral sense, due to its characteristic conception of religion. The Dutch were a staid and serious race, practical and truth-loving in their desire for knowledge. We shall find zealous theologians among them; and disputes between the innumerable sects that divided the city degenerated occasionally into riot, pillage, and bloody persecution. But the spirit of tolerance was abroad in 1630; an aristocracy of intellect had arisen, the members of which, though professing different creeds, were united by the tenderest friendship, and who, as their mutual knowledge grew, learnt that very opposite beliefs may bear like fruits of blameless living.

The dogmatic element was not abandoned in religious teaching; but in doctrine, as in all other intellectual matters, the Dutch demanded clarity and precision. They sought to establish some solid mutual ground, acceptable to all, and were unwearied in their exertions to this end. And as the Scriptures were the foundation on which their creeds were based, they felt it to be of great importance that the text in use should be trustworthy. They were aided in questions of exegesis by members of the Jewish colony, who had been cordially

received throughout Holland. Amsterdam, however, was the favourite refuge of Hebrew immigrants, and no less than four hundred Jewish families, chiefly from Portugal, had settled in the city before the middle of the seventeenth century. They lived apart, in a quarter of their own choosing, but were not confined to a ghetto, as in Rome and Frankfort. By 1657 the colonists were completely emancipated. They kept up a constant intercourse between their "New Jerusalem" and off-shoots established in England, Denmark and Hamburg. Many rose to distinction by their learning or qualities. Several devoted themselves to the study of medicine, like that Ephraim Bonus whose portrait both Rembrandt and his friend Lievens painted. Others took to commerce, and sailed in Dutch ships to establish counting-houses even in Surinam and Brazil. Among their Rabbis were Hebraists such as Menasseh Ben Israel, the friend of Rembrandt, and of the most distinguished men of his day.

The organisation of charity in Amsterdam is yet another evidence of that spirit of benevolence which, under various forms, bound the inhabitants one to another. The system of administration established in the various hospitals, lazar-houses, orphanages and homes for the aged founded or supported by private or civic enterprise, was so admirable, that it has been preserved intact to this day. City notables and distinguished patricians account it honourable to serve on their Councils. They check the expenditure with scrupulous care, occasionally covering deficits by munificent gifts. Supervisory jurisdiction is vested in a body of Regents; with them is associated a Directress, who bears the title of *Mother*. The most exquisite order and cleanliness obtain. In the Council-rooms hang portraits of administrators or benefactors. Many of these halls have thus become museums on a small scale, possessing works of considerable importance. Canvases by Jacob Backer, Juriaen Oven, Abraham de Vries, &c., are preserved in the Municipal Orphanage of the Kalverstraat. In the Hall of the Society of Remonstrants there is a fine portrait by Thomas de Keyser, and one of Jan Uytenbogaerd by Jacob Backer.

Nowhere, as may be imagined, did the spirit of liberty work

with happier results than in the domain of science and letters. Though Amsterdam, less privileged than Leyden, had no University, she could boast scholarship equal to that of any neighbouring city. She had long been the centre of culture in Holland, and the most distinguished *savants* of the day were soon attracted by the advantages she offered, when in 1632, she founded an institution modelled on the



VIEW OF THE WESTERKERK.
(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

Illustrious School of Deventer. Her Chambers of Rhetoric had taken the lead in the literary movement, and had founded the only permanent theatre in the country. The mysteries and allegories originally enacted in honour of princely visitors had given place to dramas dealing with more mundane themes, and better suited to contemporary tastes. The *Beggars* had their poets, whose terrible songs of rage and vengeance had been their battle-hymns when they swept

the country of its tyrants. The breath of popular passion touched the drama, and allusions to familiar scenes and contemporary events break the monotony of Coster's academic compositions. Thus, in his *Polyxenes*, which was first acted in 1630, he sought to bring discredit on religious fanaticism, relieving his habitual coarseness and faults of taste by occasional flashes of genius. His friend and contemporary Brederoo carried such innovations much farther. He attempted to reproduce every-day life on the boards, seeking his models in the streets and markets of Amsterdam, and abating

nothing of their freedom of speech. But he died prematurely before he had proved his capacity.

Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, an aristocrat by birth and education, was



EPHRAIM BONUS.

1647 (B. 278).

the *choragus* of classicism in the opposite camp. The diction of his insipid pastorals, *pasticci* on Tasso's *Aminta* and Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, remained unchanged—ponderous, invertebrate, full of conceits and affectations. The tragedies by which they were succeeded have

more of grace and nature, but they suffer from the same radical feebleness of conception. Vulgarity jostles pathos at every turn; and the action is impeded by endless digressions and irrelevancies. Hooft's broad and tolerant views raised him above party strife, religious or political, and he had friends of every denomination. A passion for the antique distinguished most of those who gathered round him at his country house at Muiden, near Amsterdam, where he had settled in 1609, on his appointment as warden of the district. The exchange of letters and verses in Latin obtained in this circle, which, under the name of the *Muider Kring*, was of some note in the literary history of the day. The daughters of Roemer Vischer were among its most brilliant members. These learned persons affected Ciceronian graces of style in their correspondence, and racked their brains for laborious paraphrases by which to describe very modern sentiments and transactions. Subtleties akin to the jargon of our own blue-stockings were ill assimilated by the vigorous Dutch temperament. Even with the most highly cultured, these artificial graces were allied to passages of doubtful taste, and to elaborately studied reminiscences, breathing pedantry in every line. Notwithstanding which, Hooft's talents, high position, and nobility of character gave him considerable influence in Dutch literature.

Vondel, the hosier-poet of the Warmoësstraat, was greatly Hooft's superior in originality and strength of conception. High as was his reputation among his contemporaries, his lot was no more prosperous and peaceful than that of Rembrandt and Spinoza, and like them, he died in poverty. In Vondel's dramas, the man is more apparent than the writer; whether inspired by some Scriptural theme, or some episode in national history, they breathe his innermost convictions. Careless of the animosity he provoked, he worked undauntedly for truth and justice, as he conceived them. Fanatics of every party poured out their wrath upon him. In his *Palamedes, or the Murder of the Innocent*, produced in 1625, he boldly inveighed against the persecutions engendered by religious strife. The *dramatis personæ* were his contemporaries, Prince Maurice, his ministers, and the

murderers of Barneveld, under transparent disguises ; the allusions to political events were so numerous and pointed¹ that Vondel, cited to answer for such licence, at the Hague, thought it prudent to escape incognito, and take refuge among friends and relatives. On the intervention of the magistrature, his penalties were commuted to a fine of 300 florins. In spite of this escapade, he was the popular candidate a few years later for the honour of inaugural representation in the new Amsterdam theatre, where his *Gysbrecht van Amstel* was produced, January 3, 1638. Vondel excelled Hooft in lyric sense, in vitality, colour, patriotic fervour, depth and ardour of religious conviction. His free spirit breathed unquenchable vigour, in caustic satires whose shafts went straight to the mark. He was destined, however, to suffer cruelly in his old age for his independent temper.

A contemporary, far below him in talent, was better treated by fortune. Jacob Cats, chiefly remarkable for the minute realism with which he handled familiar themes, had both the qualities and the defects that appeal to the multitude. He was at the height of his reputation in 1630. The works of "*Father Cats*" were to be found in every household, side by side with the Bible. His *Poem on Marriage* (*Formulier van den houwelycken Staet*), published in 1625, was followed in 1632 by the *Mirror of Ancient and Modern Times* (*Spiegel van der ouden en nieuwen tyd*), a work in which he seeks to prove that all practical philosophy may be summed up in popular proverbs. He illustrates his text by exhortations to prudence, order and economy, conceived in a spirit of somewhat prosaic morality. In his *Nuptial Ring* (*Trouwring*), published shortly afterwards (1637), he details conjugal anecdotes of more than doubtful propriety with a cynical simplicity, and it is curious to find this high functionary of the State indulging in a licence worthy of Jan Steen. Cats was essentially a popular writer, and his works are almost incomprehensible outside his own country. The success of his writings (to which, no doubt, Adriaen van de Venne's illustrations

¹ These allusions have been annotated and explained in a very interesting study by Mr. J. H. W. Unger, *Oud-Holland*, 1888, p. 51.

contributed) was so extraordinary, that fifty-five thousand copies were sold by an Amsterdam publisher in a single year. In modern times, however, there has been a marked reaction, even in Holland, against so debased a style of poetry, and his claims to rank in a literary triumvirate on equal terms with Hooft and Vondel, are now very justly disputed.

It is evident that literary success at this period was proportionate to the writer's knowledge of popular life, and accurate reproduction of its realities. Even in the best society, a certain coarseness marked the habits of persons whose lives were, on the whole, orderly and moral. When we remember that anomalies such as these existed in society throughout Europe, we shall more readily pardon them in the Dutch, a nation but just recovering from a struggle that had convulsed its whole social system. The education



MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL.

163 (B. 269).

of this vigorous and hitherto somewhat uncultured race was derived from camps and ships, or from theological and political treatises. Such a training was little calculated to develop the minor graces of reticence and good breeding. It is not surprising, therefore, that their amusements, public or private, should have been marked by a certain grossness. Although the general demeanour of the people was calm and slow, so that even when most active, they never seemed hurried, there were yet times when they threw off all restraint, and gave themselves up to a very Saturnalia of

riotous movement. Those who have never witnessed one of the Amsterdam *Kermesses*, recently abolished, can form no idea of the frenzy that suddenly transformed the sober populace, their wild yells, their frantic sarabands, into which inoffensive spectators were whirled relentlessly, if they happened to cross the path



THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER.
(Pen Drawing, Seymour-Haden Collection)

of the excited crowd. The *habitues* of the theatres comported themselves in much the same fashion. Decent folks were scared away by the character of the audience, and its behaviour, especially when the piece happened to be one of Brederoo's farces. A motley crew of men, women and children took possession of the

pit, where they made assignations, drank, smoked, shouted, and very often exchanged any projectiles that lay ready to hand. At family gatherings, people whose normal habits were sober and temperate became, for the nonce, eaters and drinkers of Pantagruelian capacity. The number of joints consumed and bottles emptied at a wedding feast was appalling. Hooft, who condemned such excesses as bestial and degrading, likened Amsterdam to "the island of Circe, where men were changed into swine." In primitive times, the annual feasts held at the meetings of the military and artistic guilds were frugal in the extreme, consisting chiefly of a few herrings, and tankards of beer that passed from hand to hand. But such humble merry-makings gradually developed into banquets of inordinate length. Van der Helst's large canvases instruct us as to the capacity of drinking-horns drained by the civic guards, and the dimensions of the casks they broached. Small wonder that after such potations the eyes of his honest sitters should sparkle, and their cheeks glow! It was towards the close of such a feast, when heads were getting hot, that the aged Vondel, dreading the inevitable uproar, whispered to his neighbour Flinck: "Govert, I love not strife, disputes and libations. Wilt thou remain? I must begone."¹

But such occasions were clearly exceptional, and the manifest sincerity of the Dutch painters has furnished less damaging records of contemporary life. Though they too, and notably the so-called painters of *conversations*, or society pieces, have shown us the pastimes of their countrymen in varying degrees of elegance and decency, from the drunken frolic of the peasant to the refined debauchery of the patrician. With Esaias van de Velde, Dirck Hals, Pieter Potter, Antoni Palamedes, and Pieter Codde for our guides, we run the risk of finding ourselves occasionally in queer company. But interesting as their works and those of their successors are, from certain sides, they are comparatively unimportant in view of the vast mass of testimony, equally trustworthy and

¹ Vosmaer, *Rembrandt*, p. 329.

infinitely more favourable, to be found in the pictures of their contemporaries.

The brush rather than the pen has made Holland famous among nations ; and no name in her annals shines with more glorious lustre than that of Rembrandt. Painting is the one art that has flourished supremely on Dutch soil. The others can scarcely be said to have even taken root. In Amsterdam, the only Dutchmen who rose to eminence as musicians were the three generations of Sweelincks ; the only sculptors of note were Jansz Vinckenbrink, who produced one master-piece, the pulpit of the Nieuwekerk (1648) and a number of insignificant works ; and Hendrick de Keyser, the author of the tomb of William the Silent at Delft (1621) and the *Erasmus* of Rotterdam (1622). De Keyser, however, was better known as an architect, though his churches and public buildings have little distinction. But painting was nearing its apogee at this period, and never in all the history of art, did genius bear such abundant fruit within such narrow limits of time and space. Although her Guild of St. Luke was a somewhat heterogeneous society, far below those of Utrecht, the Hague, Delft, and Haarlem, both in solidarity and importance, Amsterdam reaped the benefit of previous effort in other directions for her art, as she had already done for her commerce. The *Athens of the North*, as her men of letters loved to call her, gradually attracted all the famous masters who had been formed in other centres. There was hardly a single artist of renown who did not make a sojourn more or less prolonged within the city, and who did not look to her approval for the confirmation of his fame. Her inhabitants now formed the richest and most populous community in the country ; and among her guilds and private collectors painters found the readiest and most profitable market for their wares. Even now, though many of her master-pieces have been taken from her and scattered throughout Europe, the visitor to Amsterdam realises more strongly than elsewhere, that painting was the national art of Holland, the art that has best interpreted her aspirations and reproduced her varied social life. Foremost in genius as in numbers were her portrait-painters. In that vast

iconography of all classes and professions they have transmitted to us, everything that could indicate the tastes and occupations of their models has been noted with the most scrupulous care. The greater number of such portraits are not isolated examples; the wife makes a pair with her husband; or the couple figure on the same canvas, as if to attest the harmony of their union. In some

instances the whole family clusters round the parents, the married sons and daughters with their partners, others drawing or making music, the younger children with their playthings. To complete the illusion, servants are placed beside their masters, either in the usual sitting-room or in a landscape before the house. The composition varies in taste with the painter, but the likeness is always sincerely and conscientiously studied.



STUDY OF AN OLD MAN.
(King of Saxony's Collection.)

Together with these domestic portraits, the important canvases painted for the numer-

ous guilds form as it were a series of official documents, illustrating the history of the city, and preserving the memory of great institutions, and famous men. Art patronage was now exercised solely by the guilds or private collectors. The demand for votive pictures had passed away with the Catholic worship and its clergy. The princes of the House of Orange were very luke-

warm protectors of the arts, and Frederick Henry was the first among them to give some attention to the building, furnishing and decoration of his palaces. Even his artistic sympathies were rather Flemish than Dutch, and the rich citizens and



THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

(Pen and wash, Heseltine Collection.)

men of letters shared his predilections. Hooft, Van Baerle, and even Vondel, recognised no rivals to Van Dyck and Rubens. They could not understand Rembrandt, and never allude to him in their writings.

Amateurs who prided themselves on their enlightenment, varied their collection of Flemish masters by the purchase of Italian pictures, a predilection for which was supposed to stamp the collector at once as a person of the highest taste. Examples of the Italian masters were consequently much sought after, and fairly numerous in Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Among local painters, the *Italianisers* enjoyed most favour, and commanded the highest prices. The large majority who knew nothing of the artistic quality of a picture was captivated by their choice of elevated themes, and their close adherence to tradition in treatment. The literary and historical episodes they affected further gave the purchaser a chance of displaying his own learning in explanation and comment. The most popular among the landscape-painters were also those who sought inspiration abroad. The painters of Biblical or mythological figures in rocky landscapes and learned perspectives accounted the scenery of Holland tame and unpicturesque. With so little perception of its beauties, they naturally felt no desire to reproduce them. As has happened in every age, the most meretricious talent found the readiest appreciation among so-called connoisseurs, who saw in minute finish, exactness of imitation, and kindred tricks of facile mediocrity, the highest artistic achievement. The true masters, whose nobler genius demanded franker and more characteristic expression, had a hard struggle for bare existence.

The *genre* painters of this period often represent very modest interiors as adorned with a surprising number of pictures, and recently published inventories of the seventeenth century prove that many a plain citizen owned a considerable collection. It might therefore be inferred that contemporary painters found a good market for their works. But the absurd prices at which these works were valued, and sold at auction bear dismal witness to the true state of affairs. At Amsterdam, as at Leyden, canvases were to be bought for a few florins, signed by masters now famous throughout the world, whose separate works command prices greater than the sum total of their gains in life. Many of them lived needy and neglected, and

died in misery. The shrewder among them supplemented their art by some more lucrative calling. Van Goyen speculated in old pictures, tulips, and house-property ; his son-in-law Steen rented two breweries, which he turned to profitable account ; Hobbema obtained the post of gauger at the Amsterdam docks. Pieter de Hooch was reduced to serve as steward under a master who claimed a proprietary right in a certain number of his pictures ; many became bankrupt, or died in the hospitals.

It is the glory of these men that they sought a higher reward than the suffrages of the crowd. But our judgment of the contemporaries who ignored their greatness should not be too harsh. It was hardly possible that they should recognise art presented to them in such novel guise—art not only differing from, but in apparent conflict with, all received standards. It is only by slow degrees that the importance of the great Dutch epoch has been fully established. Its record is no less glorious than complete. Side by side with those correct and impeccable artists, whose accomplished technique satisfied the average taste of the day, it numbers innovators whose vivifying originality gave the crowning excellence to a school in which every diversity of style and talent has had its representative.

Such was the art which furnished the citizens of Amsterdam with the chief ornament of their homes. In these a great change had taken place. The vast halls of Van Bassen's pictures, and Vredeman de Vries's engravings had given place to smaller and cosier interiors, better adapted to the tastes and habits of the times. In the architecture of public buildings, Italian influences mainly predominated ; but that of private houses preserved its irregular character, each house, even on the exterior, retaining its individuality of aspect. The ornate façades, crowned with gables ending above in "crow-steps," or in huge moulded volutes, displayed every variety of ornament, from the sculptured caryatid or garland, to the emblems and devices proclamatory of the owner's profession, political leanings, and moral or religious beliefs. Entering such dwellings, generally of moderate dimensions, even in the most fashionable quarter, the stranger would

be struck by the order, comfort, and exquisite cleanliness in all, and the subdued luxury of the wealthier among them. The all-pervading influence of the Dutch housewife was apparent at a glance. Innumerable portraits have made us familiar with those incomparable helpmeets—familiar with their candid faces, rosy complexions, frank



JOSEPH CONSOLING THE PRISONERS.

(British Museum.)

eyes, and decent sobriety of mien. Some among them have a charming grace and distinction ; but as a rule, health and vigour characterise them, rather than beauty. Marking the rigidity of their closely-fitting costumes, the hair drawn tightly under the coif, the throat concealed by a stiffly gauffered ruff, we divine the virtuous regularity of lives devoted to the cares of a household, and the education of children.

With advancing age, the steady practice of honest and wholesome virtues stamps itself on the serene, unruffled faces, giving an indescribable air of dignity that commands respect. Later, as wealth increased, manners changed. But for a long time, something of



AN OLD MAN PRAYING.

(Subject unknown. Pen drawing, Bonnat Collection.)

primitive simplicity lingered in certain families, even among the most exalted, and the Dutch *châtelaine* saw nothing derogatory to her rank in the faithful discharge of daily duties, the watchful supervision of her household, and the personal direction of its humblest details.

Thanks to her ceaseless care, everything about her was orderly, and had its appointed place. Coppers sparkled like gold,

tilled floors shone spotless; coffers and presses, bright with incessant waxing and polishing, breathed forth the pleasant fragrance of clean linen, that close fine linen renowned throughout Europe, the chief luxury of the Dutch house-mistress. Along the walls, chairs were ranged at equal distances; on the sideboards stood silver ewers or vases, massive in shape, but delicately chased by some cunning artificer, such as Jan Lutma or Adam van Vianen. Above the carved woodwork, stamped leather, or porcelain tiles that ornamented the lower part of the walls, hung the pictures. These were generally of medium size, bright and luminous, to show up well in the scanty sunlight filtering through the leafy shadows of trees on the neighbouring quay. The execution was usually careful and minute, enabling the owner to make gradual discovery of beauties at first unnoticed. Those whose means denied them what was then the modest luxury of picture, contented themselves with engravings, and the printsellers of the Kalverstraat—the Danckerts, Visscher, Clement de Jonghe, Pieter Nolpe, and many more—offered them a choice among those innumerable plates which circulated from Amsterdam throughout the world. In other rooms again we find maps substituted for pictures. In all these Dutch interiors few things were non-utilitarian, none were mere incumbrances. Here and there perhaps was some curiosity brought from the Indies, lacquers, finely carved ivories, pieces of that Chinese or Japanese porcelain which it was becoming the fashion to collect, and beside which the first manufactures of Delft still held their own. In the little garden adjoining the house, narrow, finely gravelled paths divided beds neatly bordered with box, gay with bright-leaved shrubs, and flowers; tulips, narcissi, anemones, and all the bulbous plants that flourish in the soil of Holland, and even in those days formed an important branch of her commerce.

The exteriors, so faithfully reproduced by Van der Heyden, were continually washed, and repainted every year, with that minute and apparently superfluous cleanliness, which is found on experience to be an essential condition of life in Holland. Indica-

tions of order, care, and foresight strike the observer on every hand; all things bear the impress of that precise and practical spirit of which we might multiply evidences. The formal lines of houses, the rows of trees planted at regular intervals along the canals, the noiseless procession of boats bringing daily necessities to each dwelling, may seem dull and monotonous to the stranger. The Dutchman never wearies of the scene; the uniformity so familiar to him is reflected in his own life. The bounties disregarded by others because so freely bestowed on them by Nature, he has won by his own exertions; they are his creations; he knows what they cost him, and what he has done to deserve them. The buildings that protect him, the sea from which he draws his wealth, the freedom he enjoys, the very soil on which he stands, recall a long series of determined efforts and heroic struggles. All he has won he has still to defend and preserve, as he declares in his modest device: "I will maintain." Self-reliant and self-sufficing, he has given a noble example to the world. Artists, now the admired of every nation, for whose works the wealthy eagerly compete, worked for him, and for him alone. The great revolution accomplished, the Dutch sought to develop "an art congenial to their tastes and suitable to their conditions." . . . "A race of traders," as Fromentin ably puts it,¹ "practical, industrious, unimaginative, without a touch of mysticism—frugal in habits and essentially anti-Latin in intellect—its traditions overthrown, its worship stripped of symbols and imagery—such a race turned almost involuntarily to a *genre* at once simple and daring—the only one in which it had excelled for fifty years—and demanded *portraits* from its painters."

Rembrandt both conformed to the popular programme, and went immeasurably beyond it. We have tried, not altogether idly, we trust, to paint the population among which he was about to live, in order to give a clear idea of the influences afterwards brought to bear upon him, his gradual emancipation from them, and the final triumph of his originality. He was now to measure

¹ *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*, p. 172.

himself with rivals not unworthy of him. We shall see him presently outshining them all, and becoming a fashionable favourite, but we know that he was not the man to accept the bondage of popularity. He was never a complaisant idol of the multitude, and his success, so far from intoxicating him, rather moved him by a reactionary impulse, to press forward more resolutely than ever, in the path marked out by his own sincerity.



OLD MAN WITH A POINTED BEARD.

1631 (B. 35).



PEN DRAWING.
(Heseltine Collection.)

CHAPTER VI

REMBRANDT SETTLES AT AMSTERDAM—HIS FIRST PICTURES—HIS FEMALE MODELS—THE 'GOOD SAMARITAN'—THE 'RAPE OF PROSERPINE'—STUDIES OF OLD MEN—THE PORTRAITURE OF THE DUTCH SCHOOL—THOMAS DE KEYSER—PORTRAITS PAINTED BY REMBRANDT IN 1632.



SMALL FIGURE OF A POLANDER.
1631 (B. 142).

ON his arrival at Amsterdam, Rembrandt took up his abode with his friend Hendrick van Uylenborch, with whom he had lodged on former occasions. But his stay was probably brief, for one of his independent character and with his passion for work must have been anxious to find himself in a home of his own, where he could give himself up freely to his studies. The lodging he chose was on the *Bloemgracht*, a canal to

the west of the town, in a warehouse, no doubt spacious enough to afford him a studio where he could arrange his models conveniently, under favourable conditions as to light.

Rembrandt found facilities in his new residence that had been denied him in Leyden. Male models were procurable, and some few women sat to him. There was at least one, whose face and form—too easily recognisable, alas!—we find in several etchings of the

period. We are bound to admit that the so-called *Bathing Diana* (B. 201) has little of the classic grace and beauty suggested by the title. Rembrandt's interpretations of mythologic fable were rarely happy. It is hard to imagine a type more vulgar than this coarse-limbed, harsh-featured wench, with her pendulous breasts, shapeless stomach, and legs scored by the garters she has just discarded. But though we cannot be blind to the repulsiveness of such details, especially in a subject of this kind, we may draw attention to the firmness, the frankness, the skilful sobriety of the handling, the remarkable knowledge of effect, and the airy lightness of the vegetation in this plate, which, though it bears no date, is signed with the monogram affected by Rembrandt at this period. We further note the mantle with embroideries of gold and precious stones, which formed part of Rembrandt's artistic wardrobe at this date, and which he introduced in many contemporary works. The *Naked Woman seated on a Hillock* (B. 198) and the *Danaë* (B. 204) are from the same model, under aspects even more unpleasant, and the cynical and loathsome ugliness of the *Wife of Potiphar* (1634, B. 39), who lolls upon a couch in another etching, was perhaps inspired by the same sitter, and sufficiently accounts for the precipitate flight of Joseph at the revelations made by this shameless creature in the inconceivable hope of his seduction! The study of the feminine form as displayed by these viragoes added little to the master's reputation, and fortunately he soon abandoned these essays, for some time at least.¹ The above bear significant testimony to his exaggerated respect for nature, and his conscientious insistence on her most revolting realities, with that consequent total eclipse of taste we shall have occasionally to notice in his work.

The episode of the Good Samaritan had a peculiar attraction for Rembrandt, and he returned to it several times. He made use of it at about the same period for a picture and an etching (B. 90), very unequal in originality. The composition is the same in both, and is

¹ He reached occasionally a better type at a much later period. See the "*Woman with the Arrow*,"—F. W.

identical with that of an earlier plate by Jan van de Velde, save for the modification of certain details. In Van de Velde's print the Samaritan stands in front of the horse, and hands some pieces of money to the host. The latter holds a torch, for night has fallen, and the gloom is further relieved by a second torch in the hand of a child on the steps above. The distant landscape lies in total darkness. Rembrandt, strange to say, though never more absorbed in the problems of chiaroscuro than at this period, neglects the picturesque opportunities proper to such a theme, and sets his figures in broad daylight, against a luminous sky. There is infinite depth in the neutral tonality of this sky in the picture, but the composition has little character. The actors are uninteresting, with the exception of the wounded man, whose look of pain and despair is very moving. The figures are piled one above the other in the same unfortunate manner as in the *Baptism of the Eunuch*. We are far from sharing, or even understanding, the boundless admiration expressed by Goethe, who knew the work only through the etching. He considered the plate "one of the finest in the world; executed with the most scrupulous care, and yet with marvellous facility." His enlargements on this judgment are full of the romantic spirit that informed the art criticism of his day, and caused critics to read into a work of art, subtleties never dreamt of by its author—subtleties not merely futile from the artistic point of view, but harmful and grotesque. In this case, Goethe's elucidations over-leap all bounds of probability. After endorsing Longhi's praise of the spirited figure of the old man on the threshold, the great writer remarks that the wounded traveller, instead of sinking into the arms of the servant who offers to carry him into the inn, resists, and endeavours, by gesture and expression, to move the pity of a young man, who glances at him indifferently from the window above. In him the sufferer recognises the chief of the brigands who attacked him, and reduced him to his present state. His despair on finding himself in the actual den of the murderers is only too well founded!¹ Save for the cask to the right of the etching,

¹ Goethe: *Schriften und Aufsätze zur Kunst: Rembrandt der Denker*.

and the dog who is planted in a somewhat . . . over-familiar attitude in the foreground, the picture of the *Good Samaritan*, now in Lady Wallace's collection, is an exact reproduction (reversed) of the plate.¹ The latter bears on the fifth state only the words *Rembrandt inventor et fecit* 1633. The fact of the reversal proves that the plate was executed after the picture. The attribution of the print to Rembrandt



DIANA BATHING.

About 1631 (B. 201).

has been warmly contested of late, and notable divergences from his usual treatment in the trees, architecture, and even in some of the figures, have suggested the authorship of Rodermont or of Bol. It would perhaps be nearer the mark to assign a certain portion of the work to Rembrandt, while admitting the probable collaboration of some pupil. But we reserve our opinion as to the names suggested, until we can treat it at length in our discussion

of Rembrandt's scholars. The execution of the painting is a further proof of its priority, and like Dr. Bredius,² we consider its analogies with that of the *Presentation in the Temple* so strong as to rank it among the works of 1631 or thereabout.

It must, however, be borne in mind that, in Rembrandt's case, such chronological problems are often delicate matters. In his work as a

¹ It has been stated that the dog originally figured in the picture, and was erased at the desire of a former owner. No trace of such suppression is apparent; if it actually took place, it must have been some considerable time ago, for there is no dog in the engraving in the Choiseul "Gallery," to which collection the *Good Samaritan* belonged at the close of the last century.

² *Nederlandsche Spectator*, 1889, No. 19: 'Old Masters' in Royal Academy, 1889.

whole we shall find him gaining steadily in breadth and freedom as his talent developed ; yet we shall occasionally meet with examples bearing dates that seem almost incredible, taken in conjunction with



THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

1633 (B. 90).

other signed and dated works of the same year. Such anomalies may be variously explained. Many of his canvases remained for a long time in his studio, either because he delayed the finishing touches, or

because purchasers were slow in making up their minds. In either case, he probably left them unsigned till finally disposed of. Others were certainly re-painted, wholly or in part, after considerable intervals, and bear distinct traces of successive re-touching. Others again, though carried out more or less continuously, are very unequal in execution, the touch being in some parts minute and careful, in others bold and summary. Finally, Rembrandt seems to have felt the need of diversity in his methods. It was his habit to revert, after the execution of some broad and sketchy work, to his more sedate and elaborate manner, as if by way of discipline. Such variations and returns to earlier stages of development were very natural at the period we are now considering. A new-comer in Amsterdam, and anxious to make his way, it cost him little to conform in some degree to the reigning taste. His natural inclination, as his earliest works proclaim, was towards a minute study of nature, and his reverence for realities now brought him back on several occasions to the scrupulous finish that was his surest passport to public favour.

We are therefore struck by the elaboration of various works of this period which, though later than the *Holy Family* of the Pinacothek, are more closely allied to preceding pictures. We may instance two small examples in the Berlin Museum (Nos. 828c and 823). The subject of the former is, as the Catalogue remarks, somewhat obscure. Is it a Judith? A Minerva? It is impossible to decide. The picture was long ascribed to Ferdinand Bol, and hidden away in the magazines. Dr. Bode reinstated it, and restored it to the master, to whom it was ascribed in early inventories. The ascription is fully borne out by the handling, and by the half-effaced monogram of Rembrandt's first period. The young woman's fantastic costume belongs to that Oriental Utopia the master loved to render. Her dress of bluish gray is embroidered with silver, and a purple velvet mantle lined with fur, and bordered with gold and precious stones, is thrown across her shoulders. A gaily-coloured scarf encircles her waist. On the table at which she sits are books, a suit of armour, and a lute; a trophy consisting of a

helmet, a sword, and a shield, in the centre of which is a Medusa's head, hangs against the wall. Pale and fragile, her fair hair fastened by a spray of delicate foliage, the young woman gazes resolutely at the spectator. Nothing very precise is to be gleaned either from costume or accessories. The technique is that of an accomplished artist, who has painted the objects on the table with elaborate care, and has done his utmost to suggest differences of texture by dexterous variations in the brushwork. The touch, soft and mellow in velvets and silks, is firm, incisive and resolute where it expresses the hardness, polish, and metallic brilliance of arms and jewels. It recalls the sincerity and precision that mark the *Presentation in the Temple* at the Hague. But the harmony is cooler and less golden, inclining somewhat to gray, and the shadows of the carnations have a greenish tinge.

None of the obscurity of this subject can be laid to the charge of its companion, the *Rape of Proserpine*. The theme is here apparent at a glance, though Rembrandt has disregarded all classical traditions in his treatment. It was probably painted at about the same date as another picture, a *Rape of Europa*, to which it may have been a pendant. We have been unable to find any traces of this latter, which bore the date 1632, and was included in the Duc de Morny's sale in 1865. The *Proserpine*, however, has great originality, both in conception and composition. The maiden, who wears a robe of white overlaid with gold, has been snatched by the God of Hell from among a band of girlish attendants in rich dresses of varying grays and violets, as they gathered flowers in the adjoining meadow. Throwing herself back in the arms of her ravisher, she struggles vigorously, tearing his face with her nails. But Pluto, though he turns aside to avoid her onslaught, presses her closely to his breast. Beside himself with joy and triumph, he urges on the horses, who dash forward into space, with flaming eyes and smoking nostrils. Catching wildly at her draperies, Proserpine's companions strive in vain to hold her back; the black waters of the Styx already gush out from beneath the feet of the horses, who are about to plunge into the stream. Rembrandt has

turned the picturesque elements with which his imagination clothed the scene to the happiest account. A fine and appropriate effect is won by opposing the glowing sky and rich vegetation of the country to the darkness and desolation of the infernal regions. The contrast between the pale beauty of the victim and the strange features and brown skin of her future lord is no less marked. Two worlds seem to rise before the spectator, and each is characterised by the painter's happy choice of its minutest details. Note the delicate plants, tulips, pinks and cornflowers, blooming in the sunshine : the creepers hanging from the rocks above ; the car of the god, with its powerful wheels, and the golden lion, with gaping jaws and threatening fangs, carved upon its front ; the fantastic horses, straining furiously at the steel chains that link them to the car, and above all, the wild passion and impetuosity that breathe from the whole scene. Mythology, with which Rembrandt so rarely succeeded, inspired him happily for once. Brushing aside established commonplace and decorative convention, he gave reality to the hackneyed legend. His inventive genius transfigured it, informing it with an indescribable vitality and fervour that lift us at once into the higher realms of poetry.

In execution, the *Rape of Proserpine* is as highly finished as the first-named picture. The cool, almost cold, tonality of the two, is especially characteristic of this period. In each we recognise a feminine type that figures in several earlier works—an oval face, with a small mouth, round eyes, pale complexion and fair hair. Dr. Bode believes the model to have been Lysbeth, Rembrandt's young sister, and from the frequent recurrence of the type at this period, he infers that Lysbeth had accompanied Rembrandt to Amsterdam, and was keeping his house. No mention is made of such an arrangement in any of the family records that have survived, and it seems unlikely that Lysbeth should have followed her brother, leaving an aged mother at Leyden, who probably needed her care. We know further from the arrangements that were made after the mother's death, that Lysbeth was more especially attached to her elder brother Adriaen, for he then took her to live with him, and less than a year later,

in a will dated July 24, 1641, she left the bulk of her property to him, subject only to a small charge in favour of her remaining brothers. On the other hand, there are considerations which give weight to Dr. Bode's theory. Remembering Rembrandt's methods, it seems certain that a person whom he painted so often was a member of his household. In addition to which, we have already pointed out that this young girl figures in several of the Leyden pictures, notably the *Lot and his Daughters*. She re-appears in various portraits executed at the beginning of his sojourn at Amsterdam: one, a pendant to a portrait of himself, is in Lord Leconfield's collection at Petworth; another is in the Brera at Milan, and a third belongs to Sir Francis Cook of Richmond. But we think that Dr. Bode has perhaps unwittingly swelled the list of Lysbeth's portraits, by the addition



STUDY OF AN OLD MAN.
1632 (Cassel Museum).

of several that really represent Rembrandt's wife, Saskia, who, as we shall be able to prove, appears in the painter's work somewhat earlier than has been hitherto supposed. It is, in fact, difficult to distinguish very accurately between the two. As we have already explained, the works painted by Rembrandt from members of his family, or from intimate friends, are more in the nature of studies than portraits, and likeness was often subordinated to picturesque effect, or the solution of some problem of chiaroscuro. There seems to have been a certain analogy between the types of the two young girls; or it

may be, as Dr. Bode conjectures,¹ that Rembrandt, in his early portraits of Saskia, unconsciously gave her some of the attributes of his sister.

Be this as it may, Rembrandt eagerly availed himself of the new models offered him in Amsterdam, though he continued to paint from the members of his own family. Several fresh types of old age now take the place of those familiar to us in the works of his Leyden period. Among them are two dated 1632, in the Cassel Museum. The first (No. 210 in the Catalogue) is a portrait of an old man with a bald head and gray beard, a high wrinkled forehead, and small eyes under overhanging brows. The face is characterised by a mingled shrewdness and benevolence, and the handling, though apparently very free, is no less careful than assured. The impasto is fairly thick, and is worked up very elaborately in the modelling, the brushing following the surfaces with great precision; the shadows, on the contrary, are very simply indicated by means of a warm, transparent wash, through which the oak panel is almost discernible. Certain of the transitions, notably that from beard to cheek, are managed with extraordinary delicacy, and the way in which the contours are "lost" gives as much charm as power to the relief. The other head in the Cassel Museum (No. 211) bears the well-known monogram with the affix: Van Ryn. It represents another gray-bearded old man, with scanty hair, and strongly marked eyebrows. The features are somewhat large, and though the wrinkles, many and deep, tell of advanced age, the complexion is fresh and ruddy. The work is carried out in a full impasto, with rapid, feverish touches, the strokes sharply juxtaposed, with no attempt at fusion. As in most of the master's early studies, the hair and beard are capriciously drawn with the butt-end of the brush in the moist paint.

Rembrandt seems to have had the model on the premises, or close at hand, for he painted him several times at this period. He is the *Saint Peter* of a picture in the Stockholm Museum (No. 1389 in the

¹ In an interesting study published by the *Graphischen Künste: Rembrandt van Ryn und seine Schule in der Liechtenstein Gallerie*. Vienna. 1891.

Catalogue), which bears the same date as the above, 1632, and also the signature, R. H. van Ryn. It is interesting to note how the type has been modified by the artist to suit the title of his work. He has given greater animation and expression to the face. The saint grasps a staff in his right hand, and with his left presses to his breast a key, the symbol of the dignity just conferred upon him. A brown mantle is thrown across his dark dress; full of faith and zeal, he seems ready to start forthwith upon his mission. The Metz Museum owns another head of this same old man, signed: Rembrandt, 1633, and therefore painted just a year later. But here again the work is merely a study, very frankly and boldly handled. The face is turned full to the spectator; the strongly modelled features stand out in startling relief, and the somewhat coarse and downright painting is in excellent preservation. The Marquis d'Ourches, who left this precious relic to the town of Metz,¹ believed it to be a portrait of a member of his family, Charles le Goulon, a pupil of Vauban, who fled from his native town in 1685, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and took refuge in Prussia. It is scarcely necessary to add that this hypothesis is in no wise borne out by the fancy costume and the date on the picture; it is further contradicted by numerous other studies of the same person, evidently a model, whose energetic features had caught the artist's fancy. We recognise him in a life-size study of a Saint, which M. Sedelmeyer bought not long ago in England,² and he also figures in a picture in the Oldenburg Museum, attributed to Lievens (No. 187 in the Catalogue). In the latter he wears a brown robe bordered with fur, over a red doublet, and a gold medallion on his breast. We may also mention a study of a head in this Museum (No. 167 in the Catalogue) dated 1632, which recalls the Simeon of the *Presentation in the Temple*. The free treatment attests the young painter's accuracy of observation and technical skill. The tumbled hair and grizzly beard are drawn, as usual, with the butt-end of the brush; but the delicate

¹ By his will, dated 1866.

² The composition is an exact reproduction of that of a drawing in the Louvre, from which Rembrandt etched the plate known as the *Old Man Studying* (*Veillard Homme de Lettres*. B. 149). The plate is, however, reversed.

transitions from hair to forehead, and from beard to cheek, the dashing bravura of the high lights, the transparency of the shadows, and the vigour and brilliance of the colour, give an extraordinary effect of vitality.

Studies such as these were Rembrandt's relaxation in the intervals of portrait-painting, for the numerous commissions that had brought him to Amsterdam now occupied the greater part of his time. Portraiture had long enjoyed special favour in Holland. It had become in some measure a national specialty, to which the qualities of the Dutch school were peculiarly adapted. Their painters had excelled in this branch from the first dawn of art in the country. It is the kneeling donors painted on the shutters of their votive triptychs that engross our attention, rather than the central composition. The truth and vitality with which they are rendered persist even among mannerists such as Martin van Heemskerck and Cornelis van Haarlem, and all must admire the truth, the dignity, and the austere grandeur that mark the portraits of Antonio Moro. It may perhaps be urged that he was a cosmopolitan, whose adventurous spirit had led him from his native city Antwerp, and the studio of his master Scorel, first to Italy, then to Madrid, Lisbon, London, and Brussels. But masters such as Moreelse and Mierevelt of Delft, Ravesteyn of the Hague, and Frans Hals of Haarlem, were pure Dutchmen. And long before they flourished, Amsterdam boasted a school of distinguished portrait-painters. Dirck Jacobsz, Cornelis Teunissen, Dirck Barentsz, and Cornelis Ketel, were succeeded by the immediate predecessors of Rembrandt, Cornelis van der Voort, Werner van Valckert, Nicolaes Elias, and many others, whose once famous names have been brought to light again in recent years, after a long interval of neglect. In his new home Rembrandt had opportunities of studying, not only the best works of these masters, but a considerable number of portraits by Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens, and the Italians, collected by rich amateurs. We may be sure that one so inquiring, so eager in the pursuit of knowledge, did not fail to profit by the advantages thus offered him. Among painters of an older generation than himself, then at work in Amsterdam, the most

prominent was Thomas de Keyser, the son of the sculptor-architect, Hendrick de Keyser. He was from thirty-four to thirty-five years old at the time of Rembrandt's arrival, and had won a great and well-deserved reputation. The *Dr. Egbertsz' Lesson in Anatomy* now in the Ryksmuseum at Amsterdam, one of his first pictures, was painted in 1619, and was followed by a series of portraits, some of which were single figures, others pendants, and others again groups, in which the various members of a family were assembled. A past master of every resource of his art, he combined faultless drawing and fine colour with the vigour and flexibility of a technique at once lively, tasteful, and dignified. Whether he puts forth all his strength in some large canvas, or proportions his touch to the more restricted dimensions of less important works, his execution is equally free and broad. Though he never parades his accomplishment, De Keyser shows an unfailing respect for reality; and his vigorous and brilliant colouring is largely due to the extreme accuracy of his modelling in a full, rich impasto. His composition is always simple, his action always natural; while his technical mastery, and sober dignity of treatment fairly entitle him to rank among the Dutch painters side by side with Hals, and only just below Rembrandt, the one master who surpassed them both.

Before he could be accounted the rival of De Keyser, however, the younger artist had several lessons to learn from him. Hitherto he had treated his models as the fancy of the moment suggested. His sitters had consisted chiefly of his own friends and relations. In working for strangers, he was forced to renounce those freaks of costume, attitude, and illumination in which he had formerly delighted, and to content himself with the habitual severity of Dutch dress, and a close adherence to the living model. It was also necessary that he should learn something of the daily lives of those who relied on his genius for faithful transcripts of their diverse personalities. Under these novel conditions he had to measure himself with rivals, who had met and conquered the difficulties that beset him. Rembrandt accepted the contest on these terms. Biding his time for the full

manifestation of his genius, he resolved that in equipment at least he would make himself the equal of the most accomplished. Setting aside his own tastes and fancies, he accepted the wholesome discipline of a strict fidelity to nature, and a close investigation of all problems connected with his art. This phase of his development seems to us of great interest. It is touching to note the unswerving courage and tenacity which this youth, naturally fiery and impulsive, brought to bear upon his task.

One of the earliest portraits of this period was not long since in Mr. Wesselhoeft's choice collection at Hamburg, which is now made over to the Museum of the town. It is dated 1632, and in common with many works of this year bears the affix: Van Ryn, after the well-known monogram. It is of small size, and the person represented



REMBRANDT'S SIGNATURE.

seems commonplace enough on first inspection. The type is a vulgar one, with a short, flat nose, and round, widely opened eyes, under thick eyebrows. Their expression, however, is keen and penetrating; the mouth, with its small curled moustache, is full of subtlety, and the bare head, crowned by a mass of hair, is set well on the shoulders. The dress is extremely simple. The careful execution, and the full and vigorous tonality, though not up to De Keyser's level, recall certain small pictures by him. From an inscription on the back of the panel, we learn that this apparently austere personage was Maurice Huygens, Secretary to the Council of the States at the Hague, and brother of that Constantine Huygens, who, as we know, professed so great an admiration for Rembrandt. Such a commission from a person of Maurice's rank proves that Rembrandt's reputation was already considerable.

Several more important works of this period bear out the presumption. One of these, the so-called *Portrait of Coppenol* in the Cassel Museum (No. 212 in the Catalogue), represents a man in black, standing near a table covered with books and papers. He holds a pen daintily in his left hand, and cuts it with the pen-knife in his right.

The picture is not dated, but we think it may certainly be assigned to the year 1632. This opinion we base not only on the execution, but on the fact that the monogram is followed by the designation: van Ryn, a signature almost exclusively confined to 1632, and only to be found on a single later work, one of the *Philosophers* in the Louvre, painted in 1633.¹ The identity of the sitter has been contested of late, though the picture figures as a portrait of Coppenol in an inventory of 1749, and in G. Hoet's Catalogue of 1752. On comparison of the portrait with one in the Hermitage, and with Rembrandt's two etchings of Coppenol (B. 282 and 283), Dr. Bode came to the conclusion that there were notable differences, especially in the shape of the nose. With regard to the two etchings, there is no possible doubt that they are portraits of Coppenol. The likeness between the two, and the inscriptions on several of the proofs, finally dispose of the question; and, though there is no date on either, we shall show, in due course, that one was executed in 1651, and the other in 1658. It will hardly be disputed that notable changes may have taken place in the sitter's appearance during the intervals of nineteen and twenty-seven years that divide the Cassel picture from these two plates respectively. But though the type is fuller and heavier in the etchings, we cannot trace any essential differences between it and that of the picture. There are the same medium-sized nose, small eyes and high forehead—the same cut of the beard and moustache—and even in the picture, there are indications of the double chin which is so pronounced a feature of the prints. The apparent age of the sitter agrees perfectly with what we know of Coppenol, who was born in 1598. The person represented is evidently a man of about thirty-four, which was Coppenol's age in 1632. Whoever the model may have been, the portrait is unquestionably one of the most remarkable painted by Rembrandt at this period. The placid, honest face that confronts the spectator is full of a naïve satisfaction. This expression, and the gravity with which the writer cuts his pen, as if profoundly engrossed by his important occupation, are further proof, in our opinion, that

¹ It occurs once more, but quite at the close of the master's career, on a *Return of the Prodigal*, in the Hermitage, painted about 1668.

the sitter was the famous writing-master, whose vanity was proverbial, and who, according to tradition, formed an early friendship with Rembrandt.

We are less inclined to vouch for another so-called portrait of Copenol in the Hermitage (No. 808 in the Catalogue), formerly in Count Brühl's collection. The appellation is more modern than that of the Cassel picture, for in the selections from the Brühl



PORTRAIT OF COPPENOL
About 1632 (Cassel Museum).

collection, published at Dresden in 1754, this portrait bears no distinctive title. There are also notable differences in the type. The eyes are less round, and much more piercing; the nose is thinner, and the moustache thicker. The sitter is placed before a table, on which stands a small bureau, with a number of books and papers. He certainly holds a pen in his hand, but the characters on the half-written sheet before him are by no means choice specimens of cali-

graphy. They have none of the complicated flourishes and embellishments with which a virtuoso such as Copenol would have adorned the page. The model, in our opinion, was simply some honest merchant, busy over an account in the ledgers before him. Dr. Bode assigns the picture to the year 1631, and in fact discovered this date upon it. We have been unable to decipher more than the first three figures, but the monogram used, and the style of the execution, make the date a very probable one.

Another portrait, bearing the same monogram, and the date 1632, was formerly in Cardinal Fesch's collection, and now belongs to Captain Holford. It represents a man in the prime of life, dressed in black, with a white ruff and cuffs. He wears a high black hat; his right hand is laid upon his breast, and in his left he holds a paper on which is written: Marten Looten, a name not uncommon in Amsterdam at the period, but referring in this case to a well-known merchant of the city. The work is a remarkable one, carried out in a rich impasto at once firm and supple: the skilful handling, which shows no trace of effort or hesitation, recalls the manner of Thomas de Keyser. The same broad, yet conscientious workmanship marks the portrait of a young woman, seated, and wearing a black dress with white collar and head-dress, in the Vienna Academy. It bears the same date and monogram. We may



PORTRAIT OF JORIS DE CAULEY.

1632.

add to the list of works thus signed a male portrait which we saw not long ago in the possession of Mr. Quarles van Ufford at the Hague. It is a three-quarters length of a man of fine presence, with regular features, and luxuriant hair. He faces the spectator, wearing a military costume with a gold embroidered baldric, and resting his left hand on a sword. His right hand grasps a gun. According to a study on one of Rembrandt's pupils, Paulus Lesire of Dordrecht, published by Messrs. G.

Veth and Bredius in *Oud-Holland*, this martial sitter was probably a certain Captain Joris de Caulery, who seems to have had a mania for portraits of himself. He was painted in turn by M. Uytenbroeck, J. Lievens, P. Lesire, Van Dyck, and Rembrandt, who represented him "with a gun in his hand." As Mr. van Ufford's portrait is the only one by the master in which we have been able to discover this weapon, there seems every reason to suppose it the picture in question.

In addition to these single portraits, Rembrandt painted several pairs, of husband and wife, and in cases where the two have found their way into the same collection, it is very interesting to note the combinations of costume or attitude by which the painter seeks to make each enhance the effect of the other. This is specially the case in two large oval portraits, which have lately passed to America from the collection of the Princesse de Sagan. In the male portrait, signed, and dated 1632 like the rest, the face, beaming with health and vigour, looks full at the spectator from beneath the broad brim of a black hat.¹ The wife, who is also painted almost full-face, has a somewhat sickly appearance. The handling is marked by great refinement, and there is infinite delicacy in the passage from the somewhat cold lights of the carnations to their transparent shadows.

We may further note (though merely by way of record, for we have not seen them) a pair of large portraits of a man and his wife, formerly belonging to the Beeresteyn family,² to which Dr. Bode recently drew attention on the occasion of their purchase by an

¹ The features of this person, and even his costume, recall those of Dr. Tulp in the *Anatomy Lesson*, and this resemblance justifies the very prevalent belief that the portraits represent Tulp and his wife. It would not be easy, however, to determine whether the commission for the *Anatomy Lesson* was given after the execution of the portraits, or whether the success of the former picture brought about the painting of the portraits, for all three belong to the same year.

² The signature and date on these two pictures were discovered on the occasion of a sale held by the Beeresteyn family at their *château* of Maurik, near Vecht, October 24th, 1884. The bidding rose rapidly to 75,000 florins, at which price they were bought in by the owners, who had been apprised of the discovery.

American for presentation to the Museum of New York.¹ In a pair of portraits in the Belvedere, probably painted about this same year, 1632, to judge by the execution,² the arrangement of the two with a view to their mutual effect is even more obvious. The separate pictures seem to form one harmonious composition. The husband, a man of refined and distinguished appearance, is turned three quarters to the front. He seems to be speaking, and claims his wife's attention by a gesture. She, seated near a table, looks lovingly towards him, and mutely acquiesces in his speech. Neither wife nor husband is remarkable for personal beauty. But the intelligent vivacity of the man's face, the sweetness and affectionate confidence that beam from the dark eyes of his companion, and the devotion with which she listens to him, far from weakening the individual likeness, add the crowning touches of vitality. The young master, not content with a mere application of the technical skill he had acquired, was evidently anxious to produce a life-like and expressive work. He sought, not to discard, but to rejuvenate, tradition. He spared himself no pains, in spite of his great facility and rich natural gifts, and Houbraken tells us that it was his habit to make innumerable sketches before attacking his final conception. He considered it of vital importance to know exactly what he was attempting, and to plan out his creations, not only as a whole, but in the smallest details. Thanks to this initial effort, into which he threw himself heart and soul, he went at once to the root of the matter. The harmony in which his active imagination and powerful will worked together was one of the distinctive traits of his character. We shall find him full of energy and animation at every point of his career, regardless of sorrows and advancing age. Such careful and scrupulous effort, conjoined

¹ *Münchener neueste Nachrichten*, July 9, 1890.

² The date 1630 suggested by Mr. Engerth in his Catalogue (Nos. 1139 and 1140), and based by him on the somewhat cold tonality of the shadows, seems to be inadmissible. Rembrandt was incapable of such work at that date, and the portraits are unlike anything he produced at Leyden.

with such facility, such absolute sincerity of expression, united to such conscientious vigilance, ensured him the suffrages alike of his brother-artists and of the public. His reputation and popularity increased steadily. He was already a painter of note when his great opportunity came with the *Lesson in Anatomy*—the work that was to proclaim the full measure of his genius, and of his superiority to his rivals.



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.

About 1632 (B. 344).



PEN DRAWING WASHED WITH SEPIA.
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)

CHAPTER VII

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORPORATION PICTURES IN HOLLAND—THE 'ANATOMY-THEATRES'—PICTURES OF 'ANATOMY-LESSONS' IN ITALY AND HOLLAND—REMBRANDT'S PREDECESSORS IN THIS GENRE: AERT PIETERSEN, MICHEL MIERVELT, NICOLAES ELIAS, AND THOMAS DE KEYSER—DR. TULP—REMBRANDT'S 'LESSON IN ANATOMY' (1632.)



OLD MAN WITH A BALD HEAD.
About 1632 (B. 296).

THROUGHOUT all ages and countries great things have been effected by the spirit of co-operation, and nowhere have its results been more remarkable than in Holland. By its means, the Dutch fashioned their territory, and afterwards defended it against the sea; it nerved them in the heroic struggle by which their political and religious independence was won; and finally, by concentrating all the vital forces

of the nation in common action, it effected a material and moral greatness truly astonishing in view of their insignificant dominions, and the enormous difficulties attending their development. It was natural that the numerous corporations which embodied this spirit of national enterprise should exercise no small influence on Dutch art. Their important share in its development was,

however, hardly suspected till the foundation of the Haarlem Museum, with its fine series of the works of Hals. It has since been brilliantly demonstrated by the establishment of the Ryksmuseum of Amsterdam, and the gathering together of the great canvases formerly scattered among the different hospitals and guild-halls of the city. Under these new conditions, the student may readily trace the parallel growth of national art and national history.

Religious painting, or at least that branch of the art which had for its object the decoration of churches, disappeared from the Netherlands after the triumph of the reformed faith. Court patronage ceased with the removal of the Catholic clergy. But the corporations hastened to fill the breach, and soon opened fresh fields to the activity of Dutch painters. The heads of associations were painted in the robes and insignia of their dignity. Their portraits, hanging in council-chamber or banquet-hall, were so many exhortations to the brethren, urging them to follow the example of devotion, patriotism, or charity set them by their predecessors. By these means, miniature museums were gradually formed in every large town, and enriched by successive donations due to the gratitude of members, or the vanity of dignitaries. The idea of a portrait-group soon occurred to both. The vanity of each class found satisfaction in such a scheme. The chiefs, because their superior honours were more apparent thus surrounded by their satellites; the inferior members, because this was their only chance of figuring in such pictures. The painters, as may be supposed, fell in readily enough with arrangements which did not debar them from more interesting tasks, while providing them with lucrative commissions. Payment was generally made by voluntary contributions, proportioned to the rank of each sitter. By this device all were satisfied, the individual outlay being small, though the artist made a reasonable profit. There were, however, other difficulties to be met, for all these sitters had to be brought into unity by some common action characteristic of the special association to which they belonged. This was comparatively easy in the case of the military guilds, by far the most important of these bodies. But we shall find that the first

essays of painters in this field were halting and tentative, their progress slow and painful. Literary and scientific associations offered very unequal facilities in the matter of picturesque treatment. In the case of the former, it was no easy matter to exactly specify the nature of their studies. How, for instance, was a painter to discriminate between professors of law, history, and literature? In dealing with the sciences, his task was simpler. These it was possible to symbolise more explicitly by characteristic episodes or attributes. The study of medicine, in particular, lent itself readily to such treatment. It had long been held in peculiar honour among the Dutch, and its importance had greatly increased during the long warfare of the nation. The great diversity of wounds inflicted by fire-arms was the occasion of incessant research and progress in the domain of surgery; but such investigations could have no solid basis without a more extensive knowledge of the human frame than was then obtainable. Despite the impetus given to science by the Reformation, such study was jealously restricted for a long time to come. It was not until 1555 that Philip II. agreed to authorise the dissection of corpses, and even then, such dissection was limited to the bodies of condemned criminals. It was violently opposed by the nation at large, the popular disapproval being mainly dictated by religious scruples based on the doctrine of the resurrection. Several of the most intelligent men of the day made themselves the spokesmen of the dissentients. Hugo de Groot declared that the ancients, who had produced so many famous physicians, knew nothing of such "torture chambers for the dead." He declaimed against "the useless cruelties practised by the living on the dead" as "sacrilegious profanation."

Gradually, however, those higher interests of humanity which were involved won the day, and dissections became more frequent. Among those who contributed most powerfully to this result was the famous Doctor Pieter Paauw, born at Amsterdam in 1564, who had returned from his travels eager to introduce into his own country the system he had seen at work in Italy. Appointed professor of botany and anatomy at Leyden in 1589, he had thrown himself ardently into his work, organising botanical expeditions three or four times a year, to

explore the neighbouring meadows, *dunes*, and marshes. But his zeal and enterprise showed to greatest advantage in his anatomical lectures. In spite of which, however, the total number of bodies he had been able to obtain for dissection during his twenty-two years of professorship amounted only to sixty. For many years to come the Universities had to rely entirely on the corpses of criminals handed over to them by justice. It was not until 1720 that the first dissection of a female corpse was performed by Professor Frederick Ruysch, the father of the famous flower-painter, Rachel Ruysch.

From the moment that such experiments were legalised, physicians and surgeons fully recognised the value of the resources placed at their disposal, and the various anatomical preparations of which they made use in teaching, became the natural ornaments of their lecture-halls. These halls were fitted with concentric tiers of benches, with an open space in the middle for the professor, and a revolving table, on which the various objects necessary to his demonstration were placed before him. This arrangement, which was based on that of the theatres of antiquity, gave rise to the term *Theatre of Anatomy*. The first row of seats was reserved for the professor's colleagues, and persons of distinction, the second for surgeons and students, while the rest were open to the public. The Universities and Guilds of various towns, Leyden, Delft, and Amsterdam, soon vied with each other in decorating these halls with busts, minerals, anatomical preparations, and natural curiosities of every sort. Rembrandt had already seen one of these theatres at Leyden—the most famous indeed then in existence. Its construction had been directed and superintended by its promoter, Pieter Paauw. An exact reproduction of its general appearance has come down to us in the collection of prints already mentioned. The plate engraved by Swanenburch in 1610¹ shows us a dissecting-table with a corpse already opened upon it. Along the circular benches are arranged skeletons of various animals, stuffed birds and beasts, and human skeletons, holding banners on which are mottoes or philoso-

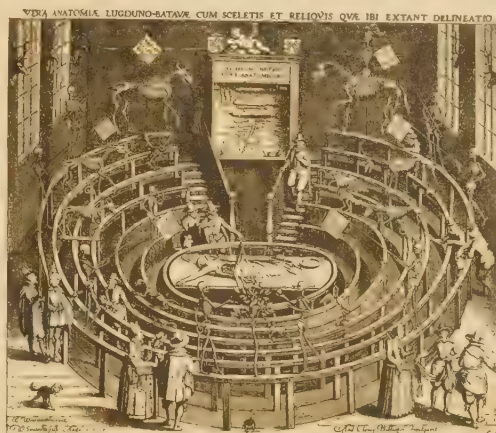
¹ Under the title, *Vera Anatomia Lugduni Batavæ cum selectis et reliquis quæ ibi extant delineatis*.

phical maxims in the prevailing taste: *Mors ultima linea rerum; Nascentes morimur; Principium moriendi natalis est, &c.* Scalpels, knives, saws, and other surgical instruments are exhibited in glass cases, for these halls rapidly became museums much frequented by the curious, and even by ladies. In Swanenburch's engraving, a lady is being shown round by an inhabitant of the house, who does the honours, and, with gallantry worthy of Diafoirus, gracefully tenders her the skin he has removed from one of the subjects.

These strange sights were very popular while their novelty lasted. Visitors of both sexes came in crowds, and we learn from a contemporary description of Leyden that, on market days, the peasants of the neighbouring districts flocked to the University lecture-rooms. M. de Monconys, who visited the Leyden *Theatre of Anatomy* in 1663, praised

it as "prettily devised, with an amphitheatre of woodwork, which is kept very clean," and mentions that it contained "a great number of skeletons, both of men and animals, and many curiosities."¹

Portraits of the most famous professors also adorned these museums, and either at the request of their models, or on their own initiative, artists commissioned to paint the professors soon began to represent them at their work, surrounded by their pupils, and by objects relating to their lectures. In painting these subjects, the Dutch were but following the example of the Italians, whose painters and sculptors, as is well known, took as keen an interest in



THE THEATRE OF ANATOMY AT LEYDEN.
Facsimile of Swanenburch's engraving (1610).

¹ *Journal des Voyages de M. de Monconys: Voyage en Hollande en 1663.* Lyons. 1677.

anatomical studies as their physicians and surgeons. Strange to say, the two first works in this *genre* were published in Venice, between which city and Amsterdam such strong analogies may be found in situation, in commercial prosperity, and in intellectual and artistic activity. The earlier of the two occurs in a *Treatise on Medicine* edited by Johannes de Ketham, a German domiciled in Italy. Plate XXVI. in the second edition of this treatise (Venice, 1493), represents the professor, lecturing, hat on head, from his rostrum. On a table at his feet lies a naked corpse, whose chest an operator prepares to open. An assistant seems to be pointing out the exact spot for the insertion of the scalpel. In a treatise by Jacopo Berengerio da Carpi, published some forty years later (Venice, 1535), we find a plate of anatomy lesson, in which the arrangement is almost the same. But it was reserved for Vesalius to collect and digest the sum of contemporary knowledge on this subject in his work *On the Structure of the Human Body*.¹ The plates in this volume were of such peculiar excellence that they long passed for the work of Titian.² One among them, the frontispiece, has a special interest for us. It is a *Lesson in Anatomy*, with certain of the details studied from life, but forming in the main a composition somewhat in the manner of the *School of Athens*. The action takes place in a sort of rotunda with columns; a concourse of persons in various attitudes crowds the arena and the circular seats. Vesalius stands in the centre at a dissecting-table, on which a corpse faces the spectator, the stomach already opened. By the professor's side is a taper, with an inkbottle, a sponge, and various surgical instruments. In his right hand he holds a scalpel, which he rests on the edge of the wound; the left he holds up, pointing with his forefinger to emphasise his exposition. A huge skeleton rises behind him; grouped around are assistants, some sharpening their knives, and scholars, some absorbed in the lesson, others discussing it. To the left, one of the pupils holds a monkey in a leash, and another a dog, the victims no doubt

¹ *Andræ Vesali Bruxellensis Scholæ medicorum Patavinæ professoris: De humani corporis fabrica, libri septem.* Basle. June, 1543.

² They are now known to have been drawn by Jan van Calcar.

of an approaching experiment. The whole scene is full of life and movement. In the tail-pieces and initials, the decorative motives are of a similar character: children dissecting animals, or fragments of the human body; others setting a skull to boil, or performing surgical operations. All such details testify to the passionate interest excited by research of this kind, which in Italy no less than in Holland had met with much opposition before its formal acceptance in the domain of science. In his preface, Vesalius speaks of the support given to the cause by Charles V. and expresses a hope that Philip II. will continue the favour shown it by his father, and will not allow himself to be prejudiced by the intrigues of antiquated detractors.¹

In the engravings we have described, the Italians, with the taste and natural aptitude so characteristic of them, pointed out the pictorial capabilities of a branch of art towards which they themselves showed little inclination. They never painted these compositions, and made use of them only for illustrations in books on special subjects. Their painters had no lack of other themes, more in accordance with Italian taste and tradition, and better calculated to find favour with the princes and clergy, their natural protectors. On the other hand, these subjects, intractable as they seemed, were well adapted to Dutch art, an art always swift to observe and eager to interpret the manifestations of national life. The first essays of the Dutch painters were not, however, strikingly successful. Their realism was more uncompromising, their taste less refined, their composition less dexterous, than those of the Italians. Such shortcomings manifested themselves in various attempts, more or less untoward, to which Mr. Vosmaer first drew attention.² But here again, as in every branch of their activity, the entire sincerity and unconquerable perseverance of the Dutch at last bore fruit, building up, out of their very difficulties, pregnant and original works.

¹ The greater part of the information relating to pictures of anatomical lectures is borrowed from a curious publication by Dr. Ludwig Choulant, *Geschichte und Bibliographie der anatomischen Abbildungen*. Leipzig. 1852.

² *Les Leçons d'Anatomie dans la Peinture hollandaise*. See *L'Art* for 1877, vol. ii. p. 73.

The first essay in this *genre* now extant is the *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Sebastian Egbertsz de Vry*, which, after long adorning its original destination, the hall of the Surgeons' Guild at Amsterdam, has been removed to the Ryksmuseum. The picture is dated 1603, and signed with the initials of its author, Aert Pietersen, flanked on either side by his family cipher, the fuller's trident, with which his father, the famous Pieter Aertsen, also signed his works. The professor, an important personage in his time, successively *échevin* and burgomaster of Amsterdam, delivers his lecture, his left hand resting upon the corpse before him, a pair of scissors in his right. The foreshortened body is partially hidden by the assistants in front. The numerous auditors, youths and men of mature age, face the spectator, standing with uncovered heads, and gesticulating in various attitudes. They are ingenuously ranged one above the other in parallel lines, and far from seeming to be absorbed in the lesson, they look neither at the professor nor the corpse ; all eyes are turned towards the spectator. The hands are well drawn, and there is considerable character in the various heads. But the work lacks the force of expression and breadth of handling that make a masterpiece of the painter's *Syndics of the Cloth Hall*. The latter is nevertheless earlier by some four years ; it is dated March, 1599. But the verve, the ease and assurance, so admirable in this group were hardly to be looked for in the same degree in a work of less importance, the execution of which, as we learn from Dr. Tilanus, was impeded by endless delays and obstacles.¹ Begun in 1601, this *Anatomy Lesson* was not finished till 1603. Five of the doctors represented were carried off by the plague in the interval, while the others were kept so ceaselessly employed by it that they had no leisure to sit.

The next in chronological order is the *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Willem van der Meer*, a large canvas painted for the Delft Hospital, where it is still preserved. According to its Latin inscription, it was designed and begun by Michiel Mierevelt, and finished by his son Pieter in 1617. Here, though the execution is inferior to that of Pietersen's picture, the arrangement is better, and the professor, who

¹ *Beschryving der Schilderyen afkomstig van het Chirurgyens-Gild te Amsterdam.* 1885.

stands in the centre of the circular reserved space, is more in evidence. But the audience seems perfectly indifferent to the lesson, and the painter, instead of sparing us the more revolting details of his subject, seems to have taken pleasure in dwelling on them. The entrails are visible in the gaping abdomen of the corpse, and a further grim touch is given in the smoke of aromatic balls thrown on a chafing-dish to neutralise the putrid exhalations.

Another picture in the Ryksmuseum represents Dr. Egbertsz giving



VIEW OF THE GATE OF ST. ANTHONY, AMSTERDAM.

(The entrance to the Theatre of Anatomy was in the tower to the right.)

(Drawing by Boudier, after a photograph.)

a lesson in osteology to six students only. This, the earliest known work of Thomas de Keyser, painted in 1619, was probably commissioned for the inauguration of the anatomical theatre of the Surgeons' Guild, which was opened in this year. The painter was barely twenty-three, and though the commission proves that his reputation was already considerable among his fellow citizens, the work itself shows a plentiful lack of experience. The skeleton divides the composition vertically into two almost equal parts, in which the figures are symmetrically opposed; two in the foreground on each side seated, and facing the spectator;

the other four standing, and turned towards the skeleton. To avoid all possibility of mistake, numbers are placed over the heads of each, corresponding to those against their names in the list. The various personalities are ably suggested, though the modelling of the heads is summary enough; while the too lavish display of vermillion on their cheek-bones recalls the carnations of Cornelis van der Voort, and gives additional strength to the hypothesis that De Keyser was his pupil.

Finally, another of Rembrandt's predecessors, Nicolaes Elias, who divided the popular favour with De Keyser, painted an *Anatomy Lesson* for the hall of the Guild. The work, which is now in the Ryksmuseum, was ordered on September 6, and delivered a year later, on October 15, 1626. It represents Professor Johann Holland, called Fonteyn, physician to the Prince of Orange, lecturing on a skull. He is surrounded by eleven persons, among whom are the four dignitaries of the Guild. But of the twelve portraits originally contained in the work, five have disappeared, in consequence of damages caused by the fire of November 8, 1723. The remainder were much injured, and were restored and partly repainted by Quinckhard in 1785. It is therefore impossible to form any opinion as to the merit of a work, which, in its present state, seems vastly inferior to the admirable group of the *Four Regents of the Spinhuis*, painted by Elias shortly afterwards, in 1628.

Thus far, such had been the chief productions of a *genre* in which Rembrandt, after his first successes as a portraitist, was called upon to try his strength in the beginning of 1632, when Dr. Tulp commissioned him to paint the picture he wished to present to the Surgeons' Guild, in memory of his professorship. With the exception, perhaps, of the Delft example, all these compositions must have been familiar to the artist, for they all figured in the hall for which his own work was designed. It is very likely that Vesalius's book was also known to him, for successive editions had been published in Holland with great success. One of these indeed had appeared at Leyden, in 1616, with notes by P. Paauw. The

latter had himself published a work on human anatomy a year earlier, entitled: *Primitiæ anatomicæ de humani corporis ossibus*. It contained a quarto plate, engraved by Andreas Stock, after a drawing by Jakob de Gheyn, representing the professor in a long robe, engaged on the dissection of a corpse, into the entrails of which he has plunged his hands. A lighted taper is placed beside him, and scented plants are strewn upon the ground to counteract the poisonous smell. A crowd of persons of all ages and conditions surrounds the professor and his assistants.

The Professor Tulp who gave Rembrandt the commission was one of the most distinguished men of the day. But the name he made famous was merely a pseudonym borrowed from the tulip (in Dutch, *tulpen*) carved upon the façade of his house. His real name was Claes Pietersz. He was the son of a rich Amsterdam merchant, one Pieter Dircksz. Born October 9, 1593, he was in his full prime in 1632. He had been one of the most enthusiastic advocates of anatomical studies, and shortly (in 1636) succeeded in bringing about a complete re-organisation of pharmacy, which had gradually fallen into great disorder. His high reputation was due as much to his benevolence as to his talents, and his life fully bore out the device on one of his portraits: *Aliis inserviendò consumor*.¹ Qualities such as these combined with his progressive energy to bring him prominently before his fellow-citizens. He was chosen *échevin* (sheriff) in 1622, and held the office of burgomaster no less than four times. Tulp had been professor of anatomy since 1628: he lectured twice a week in a room above the lesser Meat Market. When, in 1639, a hall was assigned to the Guild in the Gate of St. Anthony, Rembrandt's picture was removed thither. It has been twice carefully re-lined (in 1817 and 1860), and was cleaned in 1732. In 1781 Quinckhard "repaired Dr. Tulpius's cloak." The work fortunately escaped more severe handling. It has lately under-

¹ In addition to the marble bust carved by A. Quellinus, several engravings by C. van Dalen and J. Visscher, and Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*, Tulp was painted in 1624 by Cornelis van der Voort, and in 1633 or 1634 by Elias, probably in recognition of his services to the painter's little daughter. See an interesting notice by Dr. J. Six, *Nicolaes Elias: Oud Holland*, 1886, p. 95.

gone a judicious cleaning, and is, on the whole, in fairly good condition. But Holland has narrowly escaped losing it altogether. In 1828, the funds of the Surgeons' Guild were so reduced, that it was found impossible to give sufficient relief to the widows of destitute members. The authorities decided to sell some of their pictures and, among others, the *Lesson in Anatomy*. Had it been put up to public auction, it would very probably have been taken out of the country, but at the instance of a few amateurs, William I. bought it for the sum of 32,000 florins (£2,700 approximately), at which price it had been valued by experts.

The main features of this work, now one of the gems of the Hague Museum, are familiar to all. It is also generally known that in signing it the master discarded the monogram he had been in the habit of using and wrote his name in full, spelt as below :

Rembrants^c 1632.

REMBRANDT'S SIGNATURE.

Tulp, who wears a broad-brimmed felt hat, is seated in a vaulted hall at a dissecting-table, on which the corpse is laid obliquely. The professor holds up one of the tendons of the left arm with a pair of forceps, and seems to be enforcing his demonstration by a gesture of his left hand. Seven students,¹ all men of mature age, are grouped to the right round the corpse, at whose feet lies a great open volume.² All are bareheaded, and all, like their master, dressed in black, except the man nearest to Tulp on the right, who wears a dress of neutral tint, inclining to violet. Broad white collars, stiffened or hanging loosely about their necks, enframe their faces. With the exception of two who look out towards the spectator, all are intent on the

¹ Not "students" in the ordinary sense. Were they not, like Tulp himself, actual practitioners, though less learned in anatomy?—F. W.

² The name of the criminal whose corpse was the subject of Tulp's lecture has been preserved. He was one Adriaen Adriaensz, known as *het kint* (the child). *Iconographia Batava*, by E. Moes. J. Clausen. 1890.



demonstration. As in De Keyser's picture, numbers are placed over their heads, and their names are inscribed in the following order on a paper held by one of them: 1. Tulp; 2. Jacob Blok; 3. Hartman Hartmansz; 4. Adriaen Slabran; 5. Jacob de Witt; 6. Mathys Kalkoen; 7. Jacob Koolvelt; 8. Frans van Loenen. The figures, painted life-size and three quarters length, are illuminated by a soft light from the left, which is concentrated on the corpse, on the heads of the two seated auditors in the foreground, and on the face of Tulp, whose calm attitude, air of authority, and expression of confident intelligence at once rivet attention. A transparent penumbra, deepening by imperceptible gradations above, envelopes the rest. The unmitigated black of the dresses, the depressed whites of the collars, the tones of the carnations, the pallor of the corpse, and the neutral gray of the wall, make up the sober chord of colour.

We may admit with Fromentin that "the general tone is neither warm nor cold, but simply yellow"; that "the handling is thin and unimpassioned; that the effect is rather startling than strong; and that there is little richness either in the stuffs, the background, or the atmosphere." We may even agree with him that the corpse is puffy and ill-constructed, and shows a want of knowledge in the modelling; that it is too obviously a mass of pale light in a dark picture, and thus "has neither the beauty, the horror, the characteristic accidents, nor the terrible impressiveness of death." But we think the able critic has scarcely done justice to the work. For, as indeed he adds, "it marks a stage of great advance in the painter's career . . . and though it does not fully indicate his approaching greatness, it gives some hint thereof." Such a rigorous criticism, though it hardly gives due weight to the progress made by the master, may be accepted so far as it measures Rembrandt's work by his own achievements of a few years later. But it seems inadequate when we compare his composition with those of his predecessors. When we consider the earlier *Anatomy Lessons*, and recall the confused assemblies, in which the most revolting details are rendered with manifest enjoyment; the figures ranged side by side, with a symmetry or an irregularity alike

disastrous; the audience, with eyes fixed on the spectator, utterly oblivious of the master and his lesson; the diffused light, equally distributed throughout the composition, and bringing its want of unity and faults of taste into strong relief; when, after the contemplation of such essays, we turn to Rembrandt's conception, its immeasurable superiority cannot fail to be recognised. His work, indeed, is not faultless, and exception may justly be taken to the awkward grouping of his figures, which are ranged pyramidically one above the other in the fashion we have already had to criticise in several of his works, notably the *Samson and Delilah*, and the *Baptism of the Eunuch*. The handling, which is somewhat thin throughout, shows traces of timidity here and there; and the chiaroscuro is hesitating in parts. We need not go into the question (a particularly unprofitable one, in our opinion), as to whether the picture is, or is not, an absolute master-piece. But, with the reservations we have noted, we shall find many beauties to admire; foremost among them, the figure of Tulp, its happy simplicity of pose, its decision and vigour of expression, and the intelligent faces of the two disciples nearest the master, who hang upon every word, gazing intently at him, and endeavouring to penetrate his inmost thought. But the composition in its entirety is more striking than any of these fragmentary excellences. It is remarkable for the sobriety of the details, their perfect subordination, and the elimination of all such as by their puerility or vulgarity might impair the gravity of the subject. The arrangement of the masses appeals alike to the eye and the mind of the spectator, bringing out the essential features in strong relief: on the one side the listeners in a compact group; the corpse, the object of their common studies, between them and the professor; and Tulp himself, placed, like the corpse, in a strong light, but apart from the rest, the attention of the spectator being directed to him by the convergence of the principal lines, by the concentration of all eyes upon him, and finally by his own commanding gesture and authoritative mien. In these respects it must be conceded that Rembrandt fully carried out the proposed conditions of his undertaking. His work ably suggests the idea of scientific teaching as it was then understood—of scientific teaching, that is to say,

which concerns itself rather with facts than with abstractions. His predecessors, it is true, had insisted on these facts, but they had failed to make them rightly pictorial. Rembrandt's treatment was at once more convincing and more elevated; and while basing his conception on a realism as precise as theirs, he gave to his very characteristic interpretation a significance loftier in quality, and wider in application. Popular instinct has not been at fault in this case, and the public, while neglecting previous works of this class, or studying them merely as documents, continues to rank Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* among those typical achievements which sum up and annihilate previous efforts. It will be no over-statement of its historical importance to say that it forms an epoch, not only in Rembrandt's career, but in the art of his country. For this work consecrated the Dutch ideal, as it were, and awoke in the Dutch school a consciousness of its own strength, exhorting it to persevere in its chosen course; such art was in harmony with its tastes, its love of truth, its conscientious precision, its hankering after perfect technique. But Rembrandt, at every fresh essay in the treatment of contemporary themes, enlarged their horizons, and touched them with new life. The poetry with which he thus informed the national art had nothing in common with the traditions of his first masters, the *Italianisers*. Without recourse to trivial allegory or hackneyed symbol, he personified Science in the men of his own country and times, and expressed it by showing it engaged on the problems that form the basis of its studies. As one of the master's most fervent worshippers has truly said, he has chosen "to render life rather from the actual than the ideal side. He is a painter who paints, and paints well, because he sees well, and who can nevertheless feel and think deeply."¹ But fully as we recognise the expedience of a revolution that rejected academic tradition to return to the exclusive study of Nature, we cannot follow Bürger in his proclamation of the superiority of Dutch to Italian art. Comparisons of this kind, which must always be based to some extent on personal predilection, are absolutely futile. At the period of which we are treating, Italian art had produced its rich harvest of master-

¹ Bürger, *Musées de la Hollande*, p. 196 et seq.

pieces, and had gradually declined. It was soon to die out, exhausted and effete, in the hands of unworthy successors of the great masters. As it was then, it was certainly ill-suited to inspire the genius of a nation that had but lately achieved independence, and was eager to proclaim it in every manifestation of its activity. The art this nation had developed was, on the other hand, in its full vigour; a native birth, it faithfully translated native life and manners. And, at this decisive moment, its aims were summed up by Rembrandt's *Lesson in Anatomy*.



OLD MAN WITH A SHORT BEARD.

About 1631 (B. 300).



PEN DRAWING HEIGHTENED WITH WASH.
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection).

CHAPTER VIII

REMBRANDT'S GROWING SUCCESS AS A PORTRAIT-PAINTER—PORTRAITS PAINTED IN 1632 AND 1633—'THE SHIP-BUILDER AND HIS WIFE'—'MARTIN DAHEY AND HIS WIFE'—COMPOSITIONS OF THIS PERIOD :—'ST. PETER'S BOAT IN THE STORM'; THE 'PHILOSOPHERS'—REMBRANDT'S RELATIONS WITH HUYGENS—THE SERIES OF PICTURES ON THE PASSION PAINTED FOR PRINCE FREDERICK HENRY.



FIGURE OF A POLANDER.
About 1633 (B. 140).

THE success of the *Anatomy Lesson* was brilliant. Rembrandt's name, already well-known in Amsterdam, now became famous. His rank among the first living painters was assured, and commissions flowed in rapidly. As Dr. Bode has remarked,¹ whereas in 1631 he painted only two or three portraits besides the studies of himself and his family, in 1632 he had ten in hand, and from 1632 to 1634 at least forty. His manner

became broader, though he abated nothing of the sincerity and conscientious care that had made his reputation. He enlarged, without substantially altering his style. The execution of his first large canvas had made him sensible of certain deficiencies in freedom and breadth of conception and vigour of drawing.

¹ *Studien*, p. 399.

Taking his works in chronological order, we find several young couples among the painter's clients. Occasionally the two portraits, though painted to form a pair, are separated from each other by some twelve months ; either Rembrandt's many commissions made it impossible to finish both in the same year, or his talent and success had brought his models into fashion. The earliest examples are in M. Henry Pereire's collection, and belonged to the late Mr. Wynn Ellis. The male portrait is signed Rembrant, and dated 1632 ; the female is signed Rembrandt, and dated 1633. The husband wears a broad-brimmed black hat, a black dress, and a white collar, which enhances the freshness of his complexion. He is a man of middle age—forty-seven years old—with curled moustache and grizzled beard ; but his vigorous head and confident expression denote a virile and robust character. Deep shadows throw the face into strong relief ; the modelling, however, is extremely delicate. The most exact care has been bestowed on every detail, and the scrupulous precision of execution is carried so far, that each pleat of the gaufered ruff is in its right place, exactly in perspective, and catching exactly the right amount of light. Notwithstanding which minuteness, the general effect is bold and striking. In the portrait of the young woman, Cornelia Pronck—for both her name and age (thirty-three years) are known—the handling is somewhat less broad. Her long oval face is turned almost full to the spectator, and in spite of her red lips, she has an ailing look. In accordance with the fashion of the day, her hair is concealed beneath her lace cap, and her white collar stands out from a black dress embroidered with gold. A mild light falls on the pleasant face, which bears in every feature the impress of virtue and sincerity. With the exception of a delicate shadow that subdues the white of the collar, the whole is clear, limpid, transparent, and luminous. The cool, slight half-tones with which the flesh is modelled have the greenish tinge peculiar to the period. It is repeated in the background against which the charming head is set. The handling is neither brilliant, nor even very characteristic. But for its superior delicacy, it might be the work of Thomas de Keyser, and it is by no means extraordinary that the authenticity of these two portraits was questioned in

1876. Rembrandt's youthful works were so little known at that date, that the Director of the English National Gallery, who, according to the terms of the Wynn-Ellis bequest, was privileged to take his choice of the donor's collection, rejected them.

The portraits of another couple, now in the Brunswick Museum, were painted, like the above, at the interval of a year one from the other; that of the husband in 1632, and its pendant in 1633. They formerly passed for Grotius and his wife, but this idea was plainly a mistaken one, as may be seen by comparing the Brunswick picture with any of the famous writer's known portraits. Like the preceding pair, these are of oval shape, and the sitters are dressed in black, with double white ruffs, each pleat of which is elaborately painted. Here again the portrait of the husband is the more life-like and expressive of the two, though the earlier by a year. It is a striking face, full of vivacity and decision, with brilliant eyes, upturned moustaches, and hair brushed away from the temples towards the top of the head. The wife's expression, on the other hand, is dull and inert; the eyes have no animation; the lips are set in a peevish pout. This unattractive head was apparently little to the painter's taste.

Another couple, who deserved a better fate, have fared worse than these, and are now separated. Both portraits are signed, and dated 1633. The husband, Willem Burchgræff of Rotterdam, is in the Dresden Museum. His wife, Margaretha van Bildebeecq, in the Städel Institute at Frankfort.¹ Both are dressed in black. The faces, which are turned almost full to the spectator, have extraordinary vigour and vitality. The rapid and confident execution shows that Rembrandt painted them in one of his happiest moods; the frankness of handling and colouring are admirably suited to the robust character of the sitters.

*Rembrandt: f*c**
1633:

REMBRANDT'S SIGNATURE.

The two large portraits, the Burgomaster Pellicorne with his son

¹ Some documents recently discovered by Dr. Bredius have enabled him to correct the spelling of these names. Burchgræff was a baker and corn-dealer at Leyden.

Casper, and his wife, Suzanna van Collen, with her daughter, are probably of the same date. They are signed Rembrant, and the figures 163 are decipherable on the wife's portrait. Both are in the Wallace collection, having been bought by the late Lord Hertford at the King of Holland's sale. These canvases were unfortunately rolled up at one time; they have suffered much in the process. In arrange-



PORTRAIT OF A MAN.
1632 (Brunswick Museum).

ment they are not especially happy; Pelli-corne, dressed in black, and wearing a broad-brimmed hat, sits in an arm-chair, and offers a purse of money to his little son, a child of about eight years old, who stands beside him in a gray costume. His wife, who wears a black dress embroidered with gold, and a wide white collar, is seated. She gives a piece of money to her daughter, a red-haired little damsel with small, blinking eyes.

The treatment is careful, but somewhat dry, and the drawing of the hands is not irreproachable. The illumination is feeble, and little attention has been given to the chiaroscuro. The timid execution and greenish tone of the carnations seem to us strong evidences in favour of the date 1631-1632, which is further confirmed by the signature (*Rembrant*, as in the *Anatomy Lesson*).

The portrait of Jan-Hermansz Krul in the Cassel Museum is dated 1633. He is painted three-quarters length, standing, one hand

upon his hip, the other hanging by his side. A strong light falls on the rubicund face, which is relieved against a gray-toned architectural background. The personage thus simply posed was a poet of the school of Cats, and the author of some insipid pastorals imitated from the *Astræa*. A year after the date of this portrait, he founded the *Chamber of Music*, a sort of opera-house, at Amsterdam. His elegant dress makes it difficult to imagine that he began life as a locksmith. There are traces of his humble origin, however, in his bulky person and powerful hands, as in the tone of somewhat vulgar gallantry that obtains in many of his pieces, notably the *Theodore and Dejanira*. Notwithstanding his robust appearance, Krul died in 1644, aged barely forty-two. He was intimate with Rembrandt and his circle, for one of his works, the *Pam-piere Wereld* (the *Paper World*), contains an etching by Bol, *Death and the Courtier*, formerly attributed to Rembrandt, in which the woman's face bears some likeness to Saskia.



PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN.
 1633 (Brunswick Museum).

The year 1633 was such a prolific one that we must be content with a brief mention of the various small portraits of children, examples of which are owned by Lady Wallace, the Rothschild family, and Prince Youssouppoff. The Prince's seems to me one of the best. It represents a bright-looking boy, with a round rosy

face, wearing a fur-trimmed cap and a dark red costume. Mr. James Simon of Berlin has one of these little portraits ($17\frac{5}{16} \times 14\frac{3}{16}$ inches), painted about 1633-1634, a full-length of a young woman, wearing a black head-dress, a black gown with violet sleeves, and a white collar and cuffs. She stands near a table covered with a crimson Smyrna rug, beside a gray chair. The rug, the chair, the light upon the wall, and the charming expression of the young face, justify the attribution of the little panel to Rembrandt, in spite of a suspicious clumsiness in the drawing of the hands, and heaviness in the execution. A more important work on this small scale is the whole-length portrait of a young couple in a room, about one-third of life-size, signed, and dated 1633, in the Hope collection at Deepdene. The husband, a man of rather thick-set figure, stands beside his young wife, who is seated to the left. Both are evidently in high good humour, and neither their faces nor attitudes betray the discomfort of their posture. But it seems that the master, who had inclined to works of this size at the beginning of his career, now began to feel oppressed by their restricted dimensions. He required a larger field for the exercise of his newly acquired qualities. He holds his own by virtue of his superior knowledge of chiaroscuro and deeper insight into character, but he has more than one rival. His small portraits have neither the incisive touch and dazzling bravura of those of Hals, nor the firm and delicate modelling and exquisite refinement that mark such master-pieces of De Keyser's as the two family portraits in the Berlin Museum (1628), the portrait of the magistrates in the *Mauritshuis* at the Hague (1631), and the fine male portrait, formerly in the Secrétan collection, and lately acquired by M. Rodolphe Kann.

In the male portrait of the Stockholm Museum (No. 585), Rembrandt returns to the scale in which his supremacy is undisputed. The picture bears neither date nor signature, but we believe it to be a work of 1633. The sitter, who is dressed in black and wears a black skull-cup, holds a roll of papers in his hand. The refined and intellectual head is crowned by hair slightly streaked with gray. The work is said to represent Jan Uytenbogaerd, an ardent



theologian, who took an active part in the passionate religious controversies of the day. But we can trace no likeness between this and other portraits of the famous minister.¹ Be this as it may, the painter's work has extraordinary vigour and brilliance. Following a practice often adopted by him at this period, he has opposed the most strongly illuminated side of the face to the darkest part of his background.

Of a very different character to this austere conception is the Comte de Pourtalès's fine portrait of a young man, formerly in the Farrer collection. The young patrician, who is painted life-size and rather more than three-quarters length, has just risen from his seat. He rests one hand on the table beside him, and holding out the other in the light, appears to be welcoming some visitor with much cordiality. His genial face is shadowed by a black hat; he is richly dressed in a black doublet with bows of ribbon and silver shoulder-knots, relieved by a collar and cuffs of white lace. The charm of this beautiful work, one of the most remarkable of its period, lies in the broad yet careful handling, the frankness of the chiaroscuro, and above all, in the debonair distinction of the sitter.

But Rembrandt's great masterpiece of 1633—a year so rich in important works—is the large canvas known as *The Shipbuilder and his Wife*, in the Royal collection at Buckingham Palace. The husband, an elderly man, with a white beard and moustache, and strongly marked, but placid features, sits at a table, busily drawing the plan of a ship's hull. He holds a compass in his right hand, and turns for a moment from his task to his wife, an old woman in a white cap, who has just entered the room to hand him what is doubtless a letter.² Both are very simply dressed, and all the details of their modest dwelling indicate an orderly life of mutual affection, honourably maintained by the labours of the old man and the good

¹ Rembrandt's etched portrait of this theologian is dated 1635.—*F. W.*

² Dr. Bredius thinks that the superscription of this letter, "To the very honourable Jan Vij," gives the name of the shipbuilder. (*Niederlandsche Spectator*, 1889, No. 17.) The plan on which he is engaged bears the signature Rembrandt, and the date 1633.

management of the help-meet who looks at him with so cordial a smile, Worthy pair! We feel the depth of their attachment; we see, that growing old together they have shared each other's joys and sorrows, and that age has but bound them more closely to each other. Rembrandt seems to have been touched by their tender affection, so sympathetic is his rendering of its moral beauty and serene pathos. The frank and generous execution, the soft warm light, the sober colour, the transparent shadows, are all in exquisite harmony with the homely scene, and attune the spectator's mind to fuller sympathy with the old couple. The idea of painting husband and wife, and even the several members of a family, on the same canvas, was not, of course, a novel one. Many of Rembrandt's predecessors, notably De Keyser, had produced admirable works on these lines. But here the young artist outstripped both predecessors and rivals. Increasing the scale, he used each figure to complete the truth and individuality of the other. By bringing them thus together, he has given us not merely a picture, but an epitome of two lives, which, thanks to his art, are as closely associated in our memories as in reality.

Two years had barely elapsed since Rembrandt's arrival at Amsterdam, yet, as we have seen, he had found patrons in every rank of society. Theologians, doctors, magistrates, poets and merchants, plain burghers and young patricians, venerable matrons and fashionable ladies, persons of the most diverse temperament, age, and condition, had flocked to his studio, and all had been portrayed with equal sincerity. Great as was his pleasure in fantastic costumes, plumes, weapons, and foreign stuffs, he accepted the uncompromising actuality of Dutch costume, its somewhat monotonous severity, its dark colours, its uniform make. But small as was the licence allowed by such raiment, there were differences in the manner of wearing it, from which the tastes and habits of a life might be inferred. It is in subtleties such as these that the true artist manifests himself; restrictions serve but to develop his infinity of resource and the variety of his combinations. As in the costume of his sitters, so in their gesture and attitude, Rembrandt

observed the sobriety that befits the painter of an undemonstrative race. Simple, natural, and reticent, he yet contrives to pose his models



PORTRAIT OF J.-H. KRUL.
1633 (Cassel Museum).

in a manner appropriate to their occupations and temperaments, marking with unerring instinct the most characteristic features of

their bearing, their faces, their personality at large, and insisting chiefly upon these. He was now a consummate master of every secret of his art—truth of perspective, correctness of drawing, vigour and delicacy of modelling, the expression of surfaces and textures by variations of touch, harmony of colour, and the intricacies of chiaroscuro. But though he recognised that nothing is unimportant in this difficult art, and that the great portrait-painter is he who wins the richest result from his boundless material, he also perceived, with the earlier masters, that the eyes and mouth are the supremely significant features of the human face, the features to which we look for the expression of life, of thought, and of the various emotions that stir the soul. Our other features change comparatively little with years, and are but slightly modified by our moral action, while these are fashioned in great measure by ourselves, and take on the impress of individual habit. In Rembrandt's personages the eye is the centre wherein life, in its infinity of aspect, is most fully manifested. His portraits are distinguished, not only by the absolute fidelity and precision of the likeness, but by a mysterious limpidity of gaze, which seems to reveal the soul of the sitter, inviting us to yet closer study and a yet deeper knowledge of its secrets. Hence it is that it is impossible to forget these portraits. At a distance we are conscious of their vitality. A second inspection has always some fresh revelation in store for us, for they never yield up the full measure of their beauties at first sight, and superb as they may have seemed in retrospect, they surpass our expectations each time we return to them. The master, with his unflinching love of nature, and his marvellous powers of perception, could not be indifferent to the humblest of his fellow-creatures. In all he discovered a magic that kindled and inspired him, and throwing himself heart and soul into his beloved work, he informed the personality of his model with something of his own genius.

The success of such an artist, and his speedy popularity, may be easily imagined. So great was the demand for his works, says Houbraken, that amateurs were content to wait their turn to be



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served, and, in the words of a proverb he quotes, would-be purchasers had "not only to pay, but to pray" for a picture. Persons of distinction flocked to his studio, and among his sitters at this period we shall find members of the richest and most fashionable circles in Amsterdam. Such, for instance, is a young man in a broad-brimmed black hat, whose portrait, signed, and dated 1634, is now in the Hermitage. He has regular features, and his rather long face, surrounded by abundant chestnut hair, stands out in frank relief against a background of grayish green. A wide lace collar is turned over his black dress. The painting is discreet and sedate, but full of energy, the warm shadows bringing out the cool carnations with admirable effect. The sitter has an air of great distinction, and his refined features proclaim him the son of some noble house. Vosmaer's statement that the portrait represents the Dutch admiral, Philip van Dorp, seems to us improbable. The youthful elegance of the model tells strongly against such an identification; besides which, we can trace no likeness whatever between this picture and an engraving executed by Savery in 1634, from a portrait of Van Dorp by Rembrandt, in which the admiral is posed almost full-face, and wears a medallion hanging from a chain over his gorget.

Among the works of this period there are further two bust portraits of oval shape at Bridgewater House, the first (dated 1634) of a girl of eighteen in a greenish dress with rich ornaments; the second of another girl, fair and fresh-complexioned, painted nearly full-face, who wears a double lace collar, and a gold chain over her black dress.¹

Both pictures have suffered somewhat from time, the shadows having lost their transparency, but they are marked by a youthful freshness and charm that must have delighted the aristocratic patrons with whom the master had found favour. Abating nothing of his sincerity, Rembrandt here manifests a sense of feminine grace and beauty which some had been disposed to deny him. This grace

¹ This portrait is not dated, and may, as Dr. Bode believes, be later by a year or two than the first,

and beauty are even more vividly displayed in a work of greater importance, the life-size full-length of Machteld van Doorn, painted as a pendant to the portrait of her husband, Marten Daey. Both were formerly in the possession of the Van Loon family, of Amsterdam, and became the property of Baron Gustave de Rothschild in 1877. Only the portrait of the husband is signed, and dated 1634; but, in spite of Vosmaer, who supposes that of the wife to have been painted in 1643, some nine years later, we agree with the opinion already expressed by Dr. Bode that they belong to the same period, an opinion fully justified by the respective ages of the pair, and the character of the execution. Marten Daey, whose grandfather was apparently of English origin, is a well-known personage in Dutch history, whose adventurous career was the subject of a study by Madame Bosboom Toussaint some little time back.¹ Attached to the person of Count Louis of Nassau, he accompanied him to the Brazils, where he served in the twofold capacity of officer and administrator. Rembrandt's portrait represents him as a young dandy of the highest fashion. His elegant dress by no means conforms to the prevailing severity, and is even somewhat extravagant in taste. But the costume, which, we may be sure, was 'built' by some famous tailor, is worn with a gallantry and ease of bearing that preserve it from absurdity. The young man, a smile on his round, ruddy face, advances towards the spectator in an attitude akin to that of the Pourtalès portrait, apparently welcoming a visitor. It was Rembrandt's delight to seize such momentary aspects of life, but he was ever careful to choose such as were appropriate to the condition and personality of his models. In the young wife's portrait he has attempted more; her dignified pose, and the chastened elegance of her costume bear out the consummate distinction of her whole personality. Like her husband, she stands almost facing the spectator. She wears a black dress with a white rosette in the bodice, and holds in her right hand a fan, fastened to a gold chain; with the other hand she lifts her ample skirt, revealing a dainty foot in a tiny white satin slipper. What grace in the figure, what serenity in the gaze, what sweet dignity in the bearing! The

¹ *De Gids*, September, 1867.



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masterly yet unobtrusive handling, broad, but full of gradation, contributes largely to the general effect; and the slight droop of the head, the illumination of its transparent shadows by reflections from the white collar, and the exquisite modelling of the aristocratic hands, complete the charm of a portrait that may bear comparison with the noblest and most refined works of Van Dyck.

Two other life-size full-lengths, no less remarkable than the above, though of a very different character, are signed, and dated 1634. These are the companion pictures of Hans Alenson and his wife, owned by the Schneider family.¹ In this case the male portrait bears away the palm. The wife's, however, is not unworthy of Rembrandt. The minister's help-meet, dressed in a black gown of voluminous folds, is seated in a very simple attitude, almost facing the spectator. She is a woman of middle age, but her placid face and fresh complexion denote health and vigour. The features of this buxom dame have, however, little character, and though the master ably suggests the flaccid gentleness of her temperament, her somewhat colourless individuality pales to insignificance in the formidable neighbourhood of her husband's portrait. The latter is a masterpiece. We see at a glance that the painter had found a model completely to his taste. Like his wife, the minister is seated, in a rather heavy arm-chair, with a back of red leather studded with gilt nails. Some books are open before him on a table covered with a greenish cloth, and he seems to have paused in his reading of one, probably a Bible. Alenson's dress is a black robe with wide hanging sleeves, a white gauffered ruff, and a small black skull-cap. His powerful head stands out sharply from the background, and the eyes, which look straight at the spectator, are full of fire, intelligence, and authority. His whole personality bears the stamp, not only of bodily health, but of extraordinary moral energy. His small and somewhat wrinkled left hand is laid upon his breast with a gesture that seems

¹ Vosmaer, who calls him Ellison, says he was a minister of the Anglican Church at Amsterdam. The portrait was sold by this name and title in 1860 at the S. Colby sale in London. But Mr. Moes informs us in his *Iconographia Batava* that there was no Anglican minister of the name of Ellison at Amsterdam in 1634. He discovered however, that there was a Mennonite minister called Alenson living at Haarlem.

to attest the strength and sincerity of his convictions. Rembrandt alone could endue a portrait with such depth and intensity of expression; but even he had never before achieved such mastery and such eloquence. The picture, though absolutely faithful to nature, passes out of the domain of mere portraiture. It is a historical document, a living, irrefragable witness, so to speak, to the nature of those zealous and impassioned religious personalities that figure so prominently in Dutch history of the period, and whose influence was so pronounced in the intellectual and political life of Holland. Save that similar vagaries are common in the records of auctions, it would be difficult to explain the strange reception of these portraits by the public in 1876, when they were offered for sale on the death of Mr. Schneider. Not only did the bidding fall short of the reserve of £4,400, but certain amateurs, whose knowledge of Rembrandt's manner at this period must have been rudimentary indeed, cast doubts on their authenticity, ignoring all those internal evidences that should have placed their genuineness above suspicion. Here again we rejoice to find ourselves in perfect agreement with Dr. Bode, who fully appreciates the beauty and the excellent condition of the two portraits.

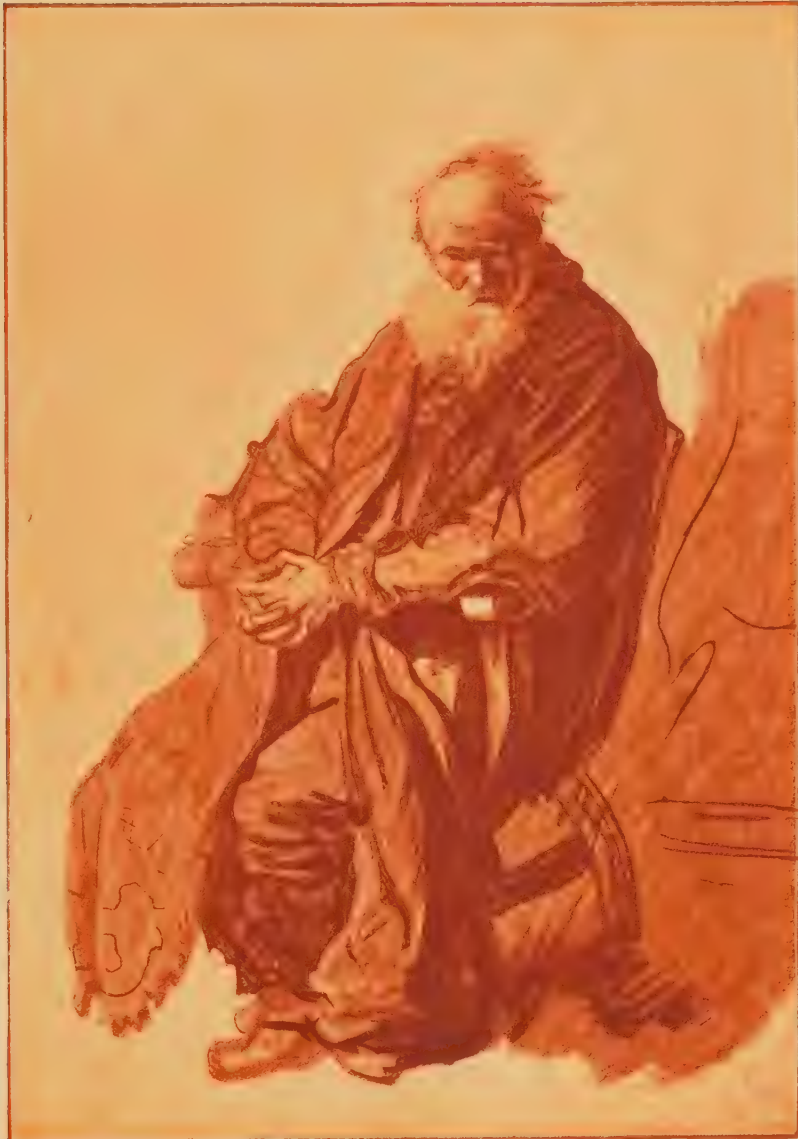
A work of less importance, though not less precious, and perhaps even better preserved, is the portrait of an old woman in the National Gallery, signed, and dated 1634. The painter, with a touch of coquetry pardonable enough in view of the age and appearance of his model, has preceded his signature by the inscription: "Æ. Suæ 83." The careful dress of the old lady adheres strictly to the fashion of her day. Her black gown, with its stiffened epaulettes, is very simple in make, and without ornament of any sort. She wears the usual little white cap with detached side pieces over her grey hair. Her face is deeply scarred by time; the wrinkled flesh is drawn tightly over the temples, and hangs loose and shapeless on the cheeks. But the head is a venerable one, nevertheless. The generous blood still pulses under that faded skin; the mouth is tender and benevolent, the eyes still gleam with kindly intelligence under their puckered lids. Though her interest in the outside world

has grown faint, the moral life is still vigorous in this octogenarian, and it is easy to understand how attractive the study of such a personality must have been to the master. His happy insight has enabled him to show us, side by side with the bodily accidents of age, the elevation of a soul purified by the sorrows of a long life, and gradually detaching itself from the world to find its solace within. As in the portrait of Alenson, the expression of the inner life is the keynote of the composition, but here the freedom and individuality of treatment are of a totally different order. The harmony of the colour is only to be equalled by its boldness; on close inspection of the luminous flesh-tints we are amazed at the audacity of the tones, the touches of pure vermilion on lips and cheeks, the daring brilliance of high lights applied with unerring assurance, the resonance of colours juxtaposed without fusion, yet melting into harmony, and when viewed at a distance, vibrating in unison. On his scrupulous study of reality in its minutest details, Rembrandt brought to bear the knowledge and inspiration of a consummate craftsman, yet he never allowed himself to be carried away by his technical facility. Always master of himself, he subordinates all the resources of his art to the achievement of his proposed end. Though he had now risen to the highest rank among portrait-painters, he had no intention of taking upon himself the bondage such a situation usually implies. He could content himself with nothing short of perfection, and strove unceasingly to satisfy his own aspirations. Among his models of every condition in life, his interest was mainly concentrated on those whose marked individuality promised to reward his penetration. He did not ply a trade, after the manner of many fashionable painters, but gave himself unreservedly to his art, with passionate ardour and ever-increasing loftiness of aim. Numerous as were his portraits, they did not entirely absorb the young master. He neglected no opportunity of improvement. Thus, about 1634 we find him painting the study of a young negro's head, known as the *Black Archer*, now in the Wallace collection. The model wears a greenish blue costume trimmed with fur, and holds a bow in his hand.

The artist, in his zeal, perhaps prolonged the sitting unduly, for the little blackamoor has a bored and sulky expression, no doubt faithfully copied from the original.

In addition to studies such as these, Rembrandt devoted a certain portion of his time to the satisfaction of his teeming imagination. No very important compositions date from this period. His days were too fully occupied to allow of serious undertakings demanding study and preparation. But among his productions other than portraits there are several that claim our attention. We may instance the picture dated 1633, and known as *St. Peter's Boat*, which was famous even in the days of Houbraken, who praises its truth of expression and careful finish. At the time he wrote it belonged to a well-known contemporary amateur, the Burgomaster Jan Hinloopen. It is now in England, in the possession of Lord Francis Pelham-Clinton. The episode of Christ sleeping in the storm was one likely to appeal strongly to the painter's imagination, and his rendering is both picturesque and pathetic. The murky sky is partially lighted by a sinister glow, and the waves dash violently against the frail ship, which seems about to sink under the foaming waters. The disciples strain desperately at the ropes and sails, while others turn to rouse the Master, whose peaceful sleep is in strange contrast with their terror. Setting aside a vulgar detail very characteristic of Dutch taste at the period—a passenger leaning his head over the bulwarks, whose discomfort is somewhat too realistically suggested—the scene is impressively and eloquently rendered by one who, from his native shores, had often watched the fierce onslaught of waters let loose by the tempest.

The undated *David playing the Harp before Saul* in the Städelsches Institut at Frankfurt, is probably a work of 1633, though it may be earlier by a year or two. The king stands in the centre, grasping a spear, and listening with a wild expression on his face, to the harmonies of the young musician, who is placed a little on one side. The vulgar features of the king, the faulty drawing of his hand, and a certain heaviness in the execution have raised doubts as to the authenticity of this work, which the Catalogue ascribes to S. Koninck. But the

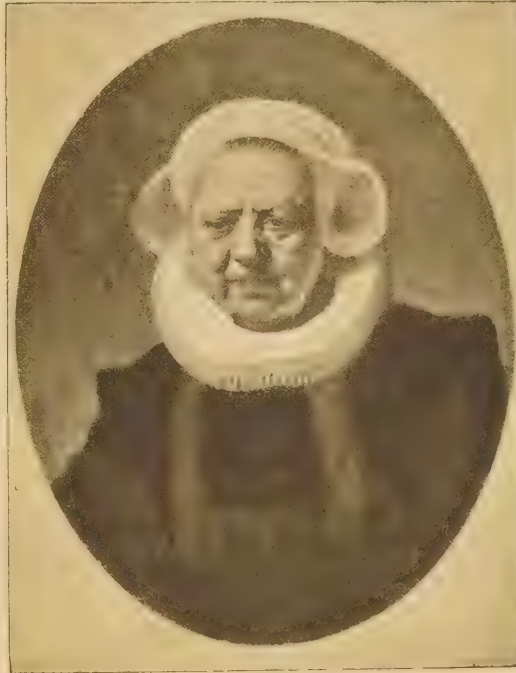


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quality of the light, the expression on Saul's face, the fine harmony of his red mantle and the cool grays that prevail throughout the picture, and finally the handling itself, which closely resembles that of other early works, all sanction Dr. Bode's restitution of this example to the master. Rembrandt treated the theme again in later years, on a more important scale.

No question can possibly be raised as to the two small panels of this date in the Louvre, the pair of *Philosophers absorbed in Meditation*.

The more remarkable of the two, No. 408 in the Catalogue, suffers to some extent from an excrescence it could have dispensed with: a woman in the foreground to the right, who is stirring the embers in a wide fireplace, evidently a pretext for the rendering of natural and artificial light in juxtaposition, and their combined reflections. The episode, however, is by no means obtrusive, and scarcely dis-



PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY,
1634 (National Gallery).

tracts our attention from the real subject, the meditative old man to whom the title refers. He has paused in his reading, and sits in a contemplative attitude, with folded hands, by a window. The waning daylight still illumines his humble retreat. In this peaceful atmosphere, he reviews his past life, and lost in thought, with a fixed gaze that takes no heed of outward things, he looks within. The venerable face of the old man, the subdued tints

of his draperies, the softness of the fading light, the delicate transparency of the deepening shadows, the choice of details, and the exquisite art of their treatment, all combine to charm the spectator by their indefinable poetry. Many other painters before and after Rembrandt attempted similar effects. In the Louvre itself, close to the *Philosopher*, hangs a *Rustic Interior* by Adriaen van Ostade, dated 1642, which seems to have been inspired by the master, and reproduces a similar impression. At a later period, De Hooch perhaps owed something to Rembrandt, when he brought all the perfection of his art to the rendering of those admirable *Interiors*, in which the complex play of light and shadow, exactness of values, and the infinite diversity of reflections, are even more subtly observed than in the works of his great prototype. But the problems with which these artists were concerned were purely picturesque, and we shall look in vain to them for any of that expressive significance, and intimate union between subject and treatment so characteristic of Rembrandt. In his art, humanity was always the essential element, and he made the infinite modifications of light subservient to the revelation of its moral life or dominant emotions. Such is especially the case in this instance. The importance he attached to the central figure of the philosopher is attested by many preliminary studies. The type is, in fact, that of the old man we have spoken of as the model for many of the earlier pictures and etchings, and for the graceful drawings in red chalk in the Berlin Museum, the Louvre, and the Hermitage. Rembrandt further made a special study from this model in black chalk and wash, the year he painted this *Philosopher*. It is now in the Städel Institute at Frankfort. The second *Philosopher* (No. 409 in the Catalogue), differs but slightly from the first, save that the composition is reversed, and that it is inferior in quality. The features lack the distinction of the first example, and the distribution of the light, though skilful, is less poetic.

Another picture of this period, the *Christ with the Disciples at Emmäus*, formerly in the Leroy d'Étiolles collection, and lately



acquired by M. Édouard André, bears the same monogram as one of the *Philosophers*, but is, in our opinion, a rather earlier work. In this first conception of a subject that Rembrandt treated more than once, chiaroscuro again plays an important part. The originality of arrangement borders on eccentricity. But the treatment is thoroughly characteristic, even in this early essay, and shows how strong a hold the episode had already taken on the painter's imagination.

At this juncture, when Rembrandt's growing fame was bringing him ever more and more prominently into public notice, his successes were crowned by a series of important purchases and commissions made on behalf of the Prince who, under the title of *Stathouder*, then governed Holland, and whose name will be lastingly associated with her supreme period of prosperity. Frederick Henry, son of William the Silent, found, on succeeding his brother Maurice, that his country was at last free from the most crushing of those difficulties with which his predecessor had to contend. In the calmer days in which his own lot was cast, it was possible to devote his leisure to the arts, and to busy himself in the decoration of the palaces he had inherited, or had caused to be built, at Buren, Ryswyk, and Honsholredyk. In common with all the patricians of his day, his tastes inclined rather to the art of the Flemings—Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens, and Gonzalez Coques—than to that of his own countrymen. But he could not entirely neglect the latter, and the brilliant achievements of contemporary Dutchmen combined with considerations of public expediency to demand the encouragement of national art. Mierevelt, Ravesteyn, and Honthorst, the accredited portrait-painters of the House of Orange, divided his patronage with the *Italianisers*, notably Moses Uytenbroeck, Pieter de Grebber and Dirck Bleker. The prince was a liberal paymaster, for we find him giving the then considerable sum of 1700 florins for a *Venus* by the mediocre Bleker. Constantine Huygens, his secretary, acted as intermediary in his transactions with artists, and we have seen how high was the opinion entertained by Huygens of Rembrandt, who had long been intimate with him and his family. It will be remembered that Rembrandt painted the small

portrait of his brother Maurice in 1632, and that of his brother-in-law, Admiral Philip van Dorp in 1633, for though the portrait in the Hermitage which is supposed to represent the latter, differs both in feature and costume from S. Savery's engraving, this engraving



DESCENT FROM THE CROSS
High Master, Rembrandt

was certainly after a portrait by Rembrandt, as is stated in the inscription. It was probably in consequence of his acquaintance with Huygens that the young master was recommended to the Prince's favour. Several letters exchanged between Rembrandt and Huygens give some interesting information in connection with a series of compositions bought at various intervals by the *Stathouder*. In 1781 these works passed from his collection to that of the Elector Palatine and subsequently from the Düsseldorf Gallery to the Munich Pinacothek, where they are now preserved.

In 1633 Rembrandt had two of the finished

works in his studio: the *Elevation of the Cross* and the *Descent from the Cross*. The opening letter of the correspondence doubtless refers to these.¹ One of them had taken the *Stathouder's* fancy,

¹ The original, of which Vosmaer gives both a copy and a translation (p. 187), is in the British Museum.

and he had announced his intention of buying it. The artist invites Huygens to come and see whether the pendant, which is also



DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

1633 (B. 81).

for sale, might not suit the Prince. He values it at 200 livres, but with perfect confidence in the judgment of "his Excellency, he will be content with what he offers." He adds in a postscript

that "the effect of the picture will be much enhanced by hanging it in a strong light." Like all the other works of the series, the *Elevation of the Cross* is an upright picture rounded at the top. As in Rubens's great triptych in Antwerp Cathedral, the cross, held obliquely aloft, divides the gloomy sky against which the livid body of the Saviour is relieved, into two equal portions. The features bear the marks of unspeakable suffering; the eyes are raised as if in supplication to the Father. A soldier in helmet and armour, and four persons who support the cross below, are endeavouring to raise it. At a little distance, a captain in an oriental dress and high turban superintends the execution, mounted on a white horse, only a portion of which is seen. To the left, guards are bringing forward the two thieves. A man in a blue cap, whose features bear some likeness to those of the painter himself, clasps the lower part of the cross, and looks pityingly at the pierced and bleeding feet of the Divine Sufferer. Surrounding the central group is a confused crowd of soldiers, women, priests, and curious bystanders. The subject is clearly expressed in its more salient features, and the strongly illuminated figure of Christ is in striking contrast with the mysterious gloom of the background.

In the *Descent from the Cross*, the central group of which we reproduce, the body of Christ has just been detached; His head, convulsed with agony, falls upon His shoulder. A man, leaning over one of the arms of the cross, holds up the winding-sheet on which four persons standing below support the body. The precious burden, drooping, mangled and inert, is received with tender respect. On the ground below, the disciples and the holy women arrange the draperies for His burial, or press forward to aid the Virgin, who falls fainting into the arms of the Magdalene. A man with a gray beard, in a turban, looks on callously at the pathetic scene, his indifference emphasising the emotion of those around him. Though the picture is carefully executed and elaborately finished, we detect various hesitations and corrections. A very evident *pentamento* shows that the two upper figures on either side of the Christ were originally rather higher up.

The condition of this work, as of the others of the series in the Pinacothek, is very unsatisfactory. It is covered with cracks and repaints, and the shadows have become so opaque that it is almost impossible to distinguish the details of background and foreground.

The master's numerous variations on this, the most remarkable picture of the series, show that he himself had a strong predilection for it. The first in order are two etchings, evidently of later date than the picture, for the proofs are reversed. One was left unfinished by Rembrandt, the other was executed under his direction. We shall have more to say of these later on. The following year (1634) he painted a replica, at one time in the Cassel Gallery, whence it passed to the Malmaison collection, and eventually to the Hermitage (No. 800 in the Catalogue). In this instance the master seems to have felt that his increased breadth of manner called for larger dimensions.¹ The excellent condition of the work allows the student to observe the gradations of light more exactly than is possible in the earlier example. Its full brilliance is focused on the body and the white winding sheet, and falling less vividly on the figures that surround the cross, it gradually melts away into shadow relieved only by livid reflections, among the persons of the background. Thanks to the learned economy of these modulations, simplicity and unity are preserved in the general effect, in spite of the multiplicity of episodes and contrasts.

The Prince's purchases were not confined to these two pictures. He was doubtless pleased with his acquisition, for a letter written by Rembrandt in February, 1636,² informs us that Frederick Henry had commissioned the painter to produce three other works, an *Entombment*, a *Resurrection*, and an *Ascension*, "uniform with the *Elevation of the Cross*, and the *Descent from the Cross*" already received by the *Stathouder*. The artist tells Huygens that "one of the three pictures, the Christ ascending into Heaven, is finished, and the others are

¹ The Pinacothek *Descent from the Cross* measures $35\frac{1}{8}$ by $25\frac{5}{8}$ inches; that in the Hermitage, $62\frac{1}{4}$ by $46\frac{1}{8}$ inches.

² This date was added long ago by a different hand, but it seems a very probable one, in view of the letter itself, which, after having been for some time in the Verstolk van Soelen collection, was purchased in England in 1871.

more than half done." He could either send the finished work, or keep it till he had completed all three; in this matter he would follow such instructions as he should receive. It seems probable that the *Ascension* was straightway delivered, and that the two remaining canvases were not handed over to the Prince till three years later. The dimensions of the *Ascension* ($36\frac{1}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{8}$ inches) are almost the same as those of the preceding pictures, but it has darkened even more than these, and is indeed the worst preserved, as well as the least interesting of the series. Here and there we note a face full of expression, such as that of the old man with the gray beard among the disciples, clasping his hands in an ecstasy of love and adoration. But the little angels scattered about the sky are singularly ungraceful, and the strange attitude and fantastic draperies of Christ Himself are entirely opposed to the sentiment of such a scene.

The last two pictures of the series, the *Entombment* and the *Resurrection*, were not completed till 1639. On the 12th of January in that year, Rembrandt writes again to Huygens, informing him that he "has carried them out with great care and diligence . . . that he has endeavoured to make these the most vigorous and natural of the series, which is the main reason why he has had them so long in hand." He asks whether he shall despatch them, and, in recognition of the secretary's good offices in the transaction, reiterates the proposal of the former letter, that he should accompany them by a canvas some ten feet by eight, which he begs Huygens to accept for his own house. The latter seems, however, to have hesitated, but Rembrandt returns to the charge a few days later (January 27, 1639) in another letter, in which he asks for instructions as to the consignment of the pictures, and begs that payment may be made "as promptly as possible." He trusts "that Huygens will not disdain this, the first souvenir he has offered him," seeing what a pleasure it will be to the artist thus to acknowledge his indebtedness to the secretary. He further requests in a postscript, as on a former occasion, that the picture may be hung "in a strong light, so that it may be looked at from a distance, for thus it will be seen to the best advantage." The order for the transmission



Engraving. The original is in the possession of the artist.

of the pictures having duly arrived, Rembrandt sent them off, with a few lines stating the price he expected to receive for them. He supposes that he will not be offered "less than 1000 florins for each ; however, should His Highness think this more than they are worth, he must give what he thinks right. He (Rembrandt), for his part, relies on the judgment and discretion of His Highness, and will gratefully receive the sum allotted to him."

Although later by three years than the *Ascension*, the *Entombment* and the *Resurrection*—the latter is dated 1639—might easily be assigned to the same year. This may be explained in a great measure by the fact that all three were begun before 1633, and that Rembrandt, when finishing the two last, evidently tried to make both style and execution conform to his



PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT.

1633 (B. 17).

first inception. But we shall see that in the interval he had modified his manner very considerably. His increased breadth and simplicity now enabled him to express himself more vigorously and clearly.

The conception of the *Entombment* lacks neither grandeur nor eloquence. The cave, its entrance hung with creepers ; the distant view of Calvary, with the sinister outlines of the three crosses against the horizon ; the turbulent crowd, the fitful gleams of light, the heavy shadows round the pallid corpse—all these are details

worthy of the master, and attest the wealth of an imagination that discovered aspects undreamt of by his predecessors in the most hackneyed themes. We must not, however, overlook defects so obvious as the meagre and puny figure of the Christ, the repulsive ugliness of several among the bystanders, the multiplicity of episodes, and the complexity arising from the use of such various sources of light as the golden reflections of the setting sun on the horizon, the flaming torch which Nicodemus shades with his hand, and the lantern to the right of the picture. In spite of such blemishes, the work seems to have been highly appreciated in its day, for three copies, made probably in Rembrandt's studio, are extant, one in the Brunswick Museum, and two in the Dresden Museum. One of the two at Dresden (No. 1566 in the Catalogue) appears to have remained in his studio, for the master worked upon it himself in certain places, and finally added his own signature, and the date 1653. The execution of the work he thus consented to father is very unequal. Certain portions, such as the group of holy women to the right, and the men who are bearing the body, are elaborately finished, while the figures in shadow at the mouth of the cave are touched in with a heavy and inexperienced hand. The figure of Christ is merely indicated, the black outlines of breast, legs, and arms being plainly visible through the paint. The heavy impasto of the winding sheet is also hastily laid on with a broad brush. Rembrandt afterwards re-modelled the composition in two etchings (one executed about 1645, the other in 1654), and in a pen drawing, formerly in the Crozat collection, and now in the Stockholm Museum. The arrangement is much simpler here, but the sketch has the same upright form as the earlier work, and Rembrandt, no doubt, intended to paint it in this shape, for the proposed dimensions of his picture are in his handwriting on the margin.

The complexity, ugliness, and faults of taste that mar the *Entombment* are still more glaring in the *Resurrection*. It would be difficult to conceive of a figure more uncompromisingly vulgar than that of the angel who has rolled away the stone from the sepulchre; and the frightened soldiers, tumbling confusedly one over another, are grotesque in the extreme. And yet, while admitting such defects, we recognise

Rembrandt's brilliant creative genius in the figure of the Saviour, which dominates the whole scene, in spite of the complexity of its lines, and its violently contrasted effects. This central figure, raising itself slowly by one hand laid on the edge of the tomb, is little short of a miracle of invention. For those who have once seen it, it is impossible to forget that wan face, hardly living as yet, in which life seems to be slowly dawning as they gaze—the hollow eyes struggling to see—the uncertain gestures of the helpless limbs. It is one of those indefinable conceptions which seem to lie almost beyond the resources of painting—one which only the frank audacity of genius could attempt, or bring to a happy and powerful issue.¹

The *Resurrection* is the last of this series, which in spite of the intervals dividing the works, we have taken consecutively, by reason of their analogies of arrangement and execution, and also because they deal continuously with the various episodes of the Passion. Interesting as they are, they cannot be ranked among Rembrandt's masterpieces. His anxiety to please the Prince, and to justify the honour done to himself, led him perhaps to multiply figures and contrasts in works the scale of which unfitted them for such complexity of treatment. It is evident that the master was no longer at his ease in the dimensions he had formerly affected. He seems further to have been haunted by memories of the Italians who had treated these lofty themes before him; but in their passage through his Dutch imagination these involuntary reminiscences lost much of the grandeur and beauty that charm us in the masters of the Renaissance. By forcing his talent to a certain extent, he abated something of his power. He amazes us by the originality of his combinations, but he no longer moves us as in familiar scenes better suited to his temperament. The absence of his characteristic merits emphasises his defects, his eccentricities and vulgarities, his tendency to crowd his compositions with a bewildering mass of details. Yet his sincerity is unquestionable,

¹ The condition of this picture is no better than that of the others of the series, in spite of the somewhat pretentious inscription placed on the back by the Elector's court-painter, who restored it in the eighteenth century: *Rembrandt creavit me; P. H. Brinckmann resuscitavit.*

and as he says in the letter already quoted, he believed he had put into these works "as much of life and reality as possible." But such qualities, which were indeed peculiarly his own, are less apparent here than in many earlier works. The time was to come when he would attain to them more absolutely, with infinitely less of effort, preserving all his "reality," with an increasing mastery of the resources of a subject, and a fuller power of expressing its picturesque and its emotional aspects.



REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.
1633 (B. 351).



PEN DRAWING, HEIGHTENED WITH SEPIA.
(Heseltine Collection.)

CHAPTER IX.

SASKIA VAN UYLENBORCH AND HER FAMILY—REMBRANDT'S PORTRAITS OF HER—THE 'JEWISH BRIDE'—REMBRANDT MARRIES SASKIA (JUNE 22, 1634)—STUDIES AND PICTURES PAINTED FROM HER: THE 'ARTEMISIA' IN THE PRADO, THE 'BURGOMASTER PANCRAS AND HIS WIFE,' THE 'REMBRANDT AND SASKIA' IN THE DRESDEN GALLERY—HIS INDUSTRY.



REMBRANDT WITH
MOUSTACHIOS.
About 1634 (B. 2.)

WE have seen how laborious were Rembrandt's first years at Amsterdam.

But our long list of the works painted at this period is far from complete. To it we must add a number of drawings, and many etchings, executed either by himself or under his supervision. As, however, any discussion of the latter involves vexed questions as to collaborators, we will consider them in our next chapter, when dealing with the first

pupils whom the master's fame attracted to his studio. Indefatigable as was Rembrandt, and jealously as he guarded the time he desired to consecrate wholly to his art, we cannot but marvel that such an extraordinary mass of work should have been accomplished by one man. A whole series of portraits

painted at this period remains to be noticed: those which the young artist, faithful to a habit he retained throughout his life, painted either from himself, or from his intimates. They form an important section of his *œuvre*, and, apart from their intrinsic merits, are interesting as throwing considerable light upon his career at this date.

Among the portraits of 1632 is one in the Haro collection, dated, and signed with the monogram of the period, followed by the words: "Van Ryn." It is an oval, on canvas, and represents a young girl, her face in profile, and turned to the left. The forehead is somewhat prominent, the nose straight and small, but thickening slightly towards the end, the mouth very dainty, the face rather full, with a hint of an approaching double chin, the small eyes rather heavily lidded. These irregular, and by no means remarkable features are glorified by a brilliant complexion, and fair hair waving over the forehead in charming disorder. The costume is remarkable for its elegant simplicity, and the execution, agreeing with the attitude and expression, is irreproachably correct and demure. This young girl, whose features we shall recognize in many works painted during the nine years of life that remained to her, was Saskia van Uylenborch, who was shortly to become Rembrandt's bride.

A native of Friesland, she had lost her mother in 1619¹; her father, the scion of a wealthy patrician family of the province, had served in the magistracy of Leeuwarden either as *échevin* or burgomaster from 1584 to 1597. He was a distinguished jurisconsult, and so well reported of among his fellow citizens, that several political missions had been entrusted to him. One of these took him to Delft in 1584, to communicate with William of Orange, and when a guest at the Prince's table, he was almost a witness of his assassination, of which he wrote an account to his employers. Rombertus died himself not long after his wife, in 1624. By this time most

¹ For the details relating to Saskia's family we are indebted to Mr. W. Eckhoff, an archivist of Leeuwarden, who published them in a pamphlet called *La Femme de Rembrandt*. 1862.

of his nine children were settled in life. Two of his sons followed their father's profession; the third was a soldier. His daughters, with the exception of Saskia, were all married; Antje, to one J. Maccovius, a professor of theology at Franeker, and an ardent Calvinist; Hiskia, to Gerrit van Loo, secretary of the commune of the Bildt, who lived in Saint Anna Parocchie, one of the parishes of this bailiwick, towards the southern extremity of Friesland; Titia, to the commissary Frans Copal; Jeltje, to a compatriot named Doede van Ockema; while the fifth, Hendrickje, wedded, on August 19, 1622, Wybrandt de Geest, the artist. De Geest was a historical painter and clever portraitist, born at Leeuwarden in 1596. From 1611 to 1630 he had travelled, for a time in France, but mainly in Italy, where his talents were so highly appreciated that he received the nickname of the *Eagle of Friesland*. After a short sojourn in Antwerp he settled in his native city, where he died in 1659. The Ryksmuseum owns a considerable number of portraits by him of the Counts of Nassau, *Stathouders* of Friesland, or princes of their family, and, thanks to the generosity of Dr. Bredius, the collection has lately been enriched by a fine portrait of a lady, full-length and life-size. These works, which testify to the esteem in which he was held, are somewhat in the manner of Moreelse and Mierevelt; but his masterpiece, a family portrait in the Stuttgart Museum, painted in 1621, shortly after his return to Leeuwarden, shows greater originality, both of observation and execution.

Saskia, who was left an orphan at the age of twelve, had lived with several of her sisters in turn, and also with a cousin, wife of the minister Jan Cornelis Sylvius, who had worked for a time in Friesland, before his "call" to Amsterdam, in 1610. Another cousin of Saskia's, Hendrick van Uylenborch, was, as we know, established in the town, where, after practising for a time with little success as a painter, he became a dealer in pictures and bric-à-brac. We know further that Rembrandt, even before leaving Leyden, was sufficiently intimate with him to lend him a considerable sum of money, and to accept his hospitality during his brief sojourns

in Amsterdam. When the young master settled in the city, these friendly relations were maintained, and we may naturally conclude that it was Hendrick who induced Saskia to have her portrait painted by Rembrandt. The young couple were thus brought together, and were apparently mutually pleased. It gradually became a habit with Saskia to visit the artist's studio, and she sat to him again twice in this same year, 1632. But on these occasions the result was not a set



PORTRAIT OF SASKIA.
1632 (M. Haro.)

portrait as before, and the likenesses in the Stockholm Museum and the Liechtenstein Gallery¹ are very different in character to the Haro example. Dated 1632, and signed with the monogram used by Rembrandt at this period, the one represents Saskia in profile, the other full-face. Her peculiar, and, in our opinion, easily recognisable features, are modelled with no less delicacy than before, but with greater breadth, the result being more a study than a portrait. Her face had become familiar

to Rembrandt, and he now lays greater stress on the dazzling bloom of her fair complexion, the expression of her small but brilliant eyes, and the beauty of the silky hair, waving in golden abundance about her face. The costume, which is almost identical in both studies, is less severe than in the earlier portrait. The young sitter has allowed the painter to drape her in the gold-embroidered cloak which was one of his studio "properties," and

¹ The latter was bought at the Secrétan sale.



in which various members of his family had already figured. The costume and general treatment of these two portraits, which evidently followed close upon the earlier picture, seem to indicate a rapid growth of intimacy between the two young people.

We believe Saskia to be the original of another work, signed, and dated 1632, which was famous at the end of the last century as *The Jewish Bride*.¹ It was

recently bought from Sir Charles Robinson by M. Sedelmeyer, and has since passed into the possession of Prince Liechtenstein. Seated, and almost facing the spectator, the young woman wears a white satin dress embroidered with gold and over it the heavy crimson mantle we have already pointed out in several pictures of this period. An old woman stands behind her, combing her long fair hair. The figures are relieved by an architectural background of warm gray, which brings out the reds



PORTRAIT OF SASKIA.
1632 (Stockholm Museum).

of the drapery, and the cool carnations. A low bench and a candelabrum are just distinguishable against the wall. The face and hands of the young woman are exquisitely modelled in very high tones, and the learned precision of touch, and transparent delicacy of the chiaroscuro make this labour of love one of the most important, as it is certainly one of the best preserved works inspired by

¹ It figured in Madame de Bandeville's sale in 1787 under this name.

Saskia at this period. Dr. Bode, however, believes that this picture and the portraits just described, represent Rembrandt's sister Lysbeth.¹ But against this opinion we may urge that Rembrandt is not likely to have painted an elaborate portrait of his sister, like that in M. Haro's collection, at a time when he was overwhelmed with commissions, and that such careful treatment of the model was entirely opposed to his usual dealings with sitters of his own family. Besides which, a comparison of the various studies here reproduced with the acknowledged portrait of Saskia in the Cassel Gallery, to which we shall return presently, will convince our readers of the identity of type, so far as it is possible to trace it in works so freely treated, and so evidently rather in the nature of studies than of portraits.

Be this as it may, Rembrandt now neglected no opportunity of closer intimacy with Saskia. He had made the acquaintance of the Sylvius family, with whom she was living at this time, and a portrait of the minister occurs among the etchings of 1633. Sylvius was then a man of about sixty-nine, and had been working in the ministry for over forty years. He was held in general respect, and a Latin epigraph, written by C. van Baerle for another portrait of Sylvius, engraved by Rembrandt in 1646, justly extols his learning, his eloquence, his simplicity of life and dignity of manners, and the authority with which such qualities endued his teaching and example. In the print of 1633 Sylvius is represented almost full face. His features are venerable and somewhat austere, and their expression harmonises with his bearing and attitude. He has paused for a moment in his reading, and meditates, his two hands laid upon the open book before him. An inscription made by Rembrandt on one of the prints shows that the artist had presented him with several impressions of the portrait: "To Jan Cornelis Sylvius, these four impressions."²

Rembrandt's numerous portraits of Saskia, and his attentions to

¹ See the article in the *Graphischen Künste* already quoted.

The print in question belonged to Madame van Lennep, a descendant of Sylvius in 1860.

members of her family, proclaim the feelings with which the young girl had inspired him. Love, once admitted into that passionate heart, had taken absolute possession. Up to this date the young painter had lived a very retired life at Amsterdam; he had no taste for the amusements that pleased his brother-artists, and was never to be met with in any of the taverns or other haunts frequented by them. Absorbed in his art, he never willingly left his studio. A man with such habits and with Rembrandt's loving disposition must have longed for a home of his own; his thoughts naturally turned to marriage. His meeting with the gentle, well-born girl was not without results. She, he felt, was the mate for him. He accordingly unbosomed himself to the Sylviuses, her guardians. In a family which, though mainly composed of ministers and lawyers, already reckoned several artists among its members, no prejudice was likely to be felt against his calling. De Geest was making an honourable living in Friesland, where he was highly esteemed; a cousin of Saskia's, named Rombertus, like her father, was also a painter, and finally, there was Hendrick van Uylenborch, ready to answer for his friend at need. He had kept up the most friendly relations with the artist, and to him Rembrandt confided in 1633 the sale of the important engraving, the *Descent from the Cross*, which, if not actually by the master himself, was at least executed from his design and bears his signature. Hendrick's dealings with collectors enabled him to give his relatives a favourable account of the young painter's means. No artist was more sought after in Amsterdam at that period, nor was there one whose future seemed so full of brilliant promise. He was the fashionable portrait-painter of the day; sitters of the highest social position in Amsterdam were always to be found in his studio; the *Stathouder* himself had honoured him with important commissions. His earnings were therefore considerable, and even to a bride of independent fortune, like Saskia, the position he offered was an enviable one. The evidence as to character was equally favourable, his goodness to his parents, his studious life, and temperate habits, being greatly to his credit. His moderation was remarkable, for according to Houbraken:—"He lived very simply, and when at work, contented

himself with a herring or a piece of cheese, and bread." His only extravagance was one with which Hendrick was not disposed to find fault. This was his passion for curiosities and *objets d'art*, which he was just beginning to collect. But no one was likely to blame him for thus adorning his dwelling. It seemed, indeed, commendable, and in some measure a guarantee of domesticity. We may add that



1632 (Liechtenstein Collection).

the portraits he painted of himself at this period—one at Dulwich, and one at Petworth, both dated 1632 and very delicately handled; one in the Hague Museum (about 1633—1634), where he figures in the martial costume he loved to don; and two in the Louvre, dated 1633 and 1634, where the treatment is broader and freer—all represent him as peculiarly attractive in person. The last of these, especially, is the portrait of an accomplished cavalier; his open face and confident bearing bespeak

the full maturity of strength and of genius, together with the easy good breeding of one at home in Society.

The career that was opening before Rembrandt, his sober life, his industry, and his personal charm, pleaded powerfully in his favour. The position he had secured by his talents was such as to inspire confidence even in the cautious minds of the Sylviuses, while Saskia was naturally won by his youthful ardour, and the halo of

glory that already encircled his name. His suit was successful, and the numerous portraits he painted of his betrothed show that the young couple were much together. But, whether to test the strength of their attachment, or to allow the young girl herself to bestow her hand upon her lover, the marriage was deferred till after her majority. In the interval, Rembrandt fed his passion, both for Saskia and for his art, by multiplying portraits of her. We recognise her type, as we know it from Prince Liechtenstein's picture of 1632, in an oval painting belonging to Baron Hirsch, dated 1633. The head, with its unruly auburn hair, rounded forehead, and dainty, pouting mouth, is turned almost full to the spectator. The fresh carnations are brought into strong relief by the brown background and the neutral gray of the deep shadows. In another portrait, in the Dresden Museum, signed, and dated 1633, the head



PORTRAIT OF SASKIA.
About 1634 (Cassel Museum). •

is slightly turned and gaily illuminated by a ray of sunlight. The crimson cap with its gray plume, throws a warm, transparent shadow over the forehead. A blue dress patterned with white is coquettishly trimmed with gold loops and shoulder-knots, and the hands are encased in gray gloves. The half-closed eyes twinkle roguishly, and the smiling lips reveal teeth whiter than the pearls upon the chemisette. Radiant in all her youthful bloom, Saskia

seems to be dreaming of the life which looked so full of happy promise.

The portrait of Saskia in the Cassel Gallery is of a totally different character. Though painted with extreme care, and perhaps one of the most finished and elaborate of Rembrandt's works, it is neither signed nor dated. It was probably painted for Saskia herself, and there was no need to attest an authenticity which the picture itself proclaimed.¹ The young girl wears a broad-brimmed hat of red velvet, with a sweeping white feather. Her face is in profile, and this must certainly have been the aspect he thought most favourable to her, for she is about the only person he painted thus. The complexion is as brilliant as ever, and though the face is now rather thinner than in the Haro and Stockholm portraits, the characteristic features are the same, notably the shape of the eyes, the nose, thickening a little towards the end, and the slightly compressed lips. Saskia's dress and jewels are extremely rich, and her picturesque, but *voyant* costume is rendered with great elaboration.² It is evident that, together with a scrupulous study of nature, the painter desired to show the utmost refinement of knowledge in his modelling, enhanced by all the additional charm to be won from harmony of colour and delicacy of chiaroscuro. An allusion to the relations ^{now} between the artist and his model is to be found in the sprig of rosemary—the emblem of betrothal in Holland—which the young girl holds against her heart with her right hand.

As the date fixed for their marriage was still distant, Saskia left Amsterdam for Franeker in the autumn of 1633. She may have been summoned by her sister Antje, who was probably an invalid at the time, for she died November 9, 1633. Saskia then went to the Van Loos, at Anna-Parocchie, where she spent the winter.

¹ The replica of this portrait in the Antwerp Museum, which long passed for an original, is a somewhat heavy and mediocre copy made in Rembrandt's lifetime, probably by one of his pupils.

² The skilful restoration undertaken by Herr Hauser in 1888 has revived the extraordinary brilliance of this picture, and has brought to light several *pentimenti*, such as an alteration of the hat, which Rembrandt, eager to beautify his mistress, had at first adorned with one or two more feathers.



But she must have paid a visit to Amsterdam in the spring of 1634, for Rembrandt then painted a fresh portrait of her. This was the picture in the Hermitage, somewhat unaccountably known as *The Jewish Bride*. The title *Flora* would be more appropriate. Following a very general fashion of the period, Saskia is arrayed as a shepherdess and stands at the mouth of a grotto hung with creepers. In her right hand she holds a flower-twined crook ; on her head is a heavy wreath of ranunculus, anemone, fritillary and iris, a columbine, and a striped red and white tulip. Some sprays of foliage are intermixed with these perhaps somewhat over-abundant spring blossoms. They are, however, very carefully studied from nature, and fix the season at which the picture was painted. The date, 1634, in white figures is placed under the master's signature. The rosy face, turned almost full to the spectator, is strongly illuminated. The luxuriant hair enframing it falls in disorder upon the shoulders. An oriental scarf is crossed upon her breast, and with her left hand she draws round her the folds of a wide mantle of pale green, which is thrown over her white brocaded gown. Her attitude, the slightly bent figure, and the massing of the folds about the waist, give her a somewhat matronly air, and but for the unquestionable authenticity of the date, the portrait might well have been painted a year later. Innocent and engaging in her brilliant draperies and gaily tinted flowers, she stands, a graceful apparition, the light falling full upon her. Spring itself seems to be singing a pæan of love and poetry from the master's palette, at the dawn of that year which was to bring about the propitious union. Rembrandt seems to have been pleased with the travesty, for he repeated it with but slight modifications, in another picture painted not long after, which belonged successively to W. H. Fortescue, the Duke of Buccleuch, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in later times to Sir Edmund Lechmere. The composition is almost identical ; the young woman faces the spectator, her abundant hair falling about her shoulders. As in the Hermitage picture, she carries a crook wreathed with flowers ; but her dress is cut rather lower, and in her left hand she holds a nosegay. The execution is very free, and the treatment more decorative than in the earlier example.

At the beginning of the summer, Saskia returned to her sister Hiskia. The date of the wedding was fixed, and Rembrandt was soon to rejoin her. In the marriage register of Amsterdam, under the date June 10, 1634, we find the declaration made

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn



PORTRAIT OF SASKIA.

1634 (B. 347).

before the commissaries by the *preacher* Jan Cornelis Sylvius, who, as Saskia's cousin, pledges himself on her behalf to give his formal consent to the marriage before the third publication of the banns. On his side Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, of Leyden, aged twenty-six years, residing in the Breestraat engages to produce his mother's consent in due course, and triumphantly adds the signature of which we give a facsimile.

Rembrandt, we may conclude, fetched this consent from Leyden himself, taking the opportunity of a visit to his mother, and then hastened to rejoin Saskia. Four days later, on June 14, he brought the notarial act dealing

with the authorisation, to Amsterdam, and appealed to the commissaries to abridge some of the formalities connected with the publication of the banns. When all was in order, the artist returned to his bride; the marriage took place in the town hall of Bildt, in the presence of the Van Loos, June 22, 1634, and was afterwards solemnized at the parish church by the minister, Rodolf Hermansz Luinga.

Ardent in temperament and somewhat unsociable as we know

¹ *Rembrandt: Discours sur sa Vie et son Génie*, by Dr. Scheltema; published and annotated by W. Bürger. Paris. Renouard. 1866.

Rembrandt to have been, we can readily imagine that he hastened to carry off his bride to the home he had prepared, and in which he was impatient to hide his happiness from the world. Saskia's



THE JEWISH BRIDE.

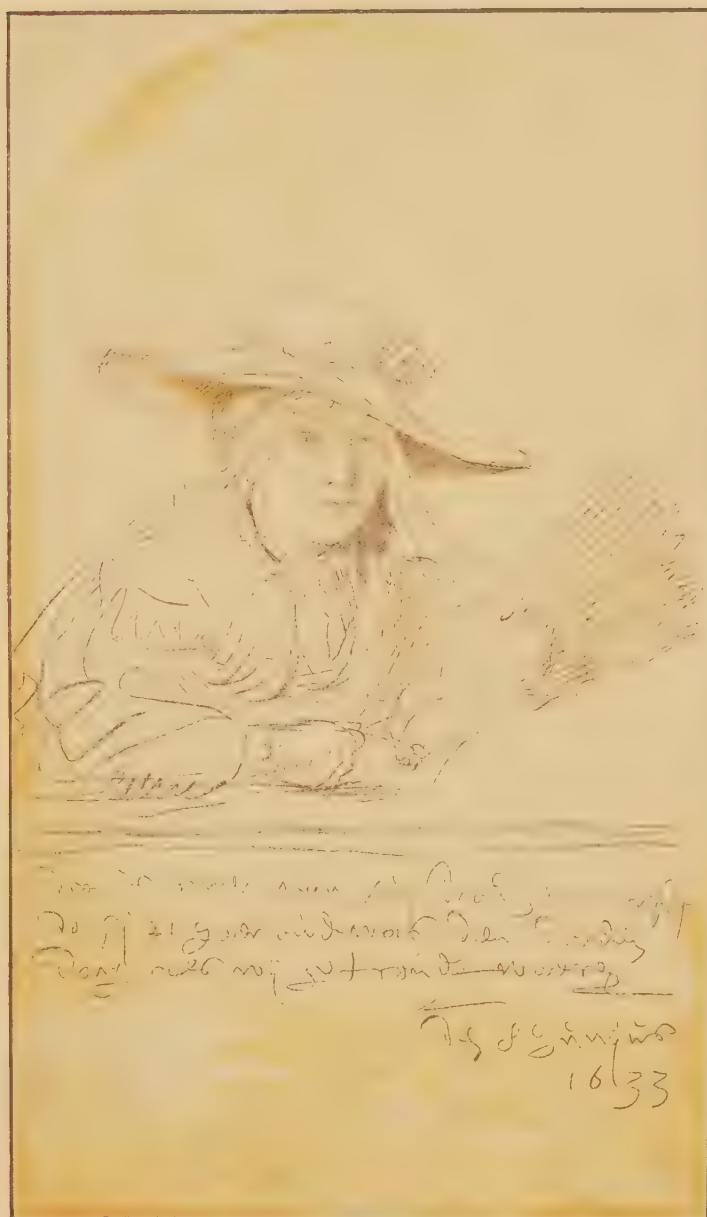
1634 (Hermitage).

simple and loving nature knew no wishes but her husband's. Entirely devoted to him, she never sought to direct his course, and there was no consciousness of sacrifice in the

readiness with which she gave up all to him. Rembrandt's tastes and pleasures should be hers. To him, idleness was impossible; rejoicing in the possibility of combining the two passions of his heart, he set to work at once, taking advantage of the charming model who henceforth was never to leave him. A beautiful silver point sketch in the Berlin Museum, to which Vosmaer was the first to call attention, shows us Saskia's pleasant features, drawn with a firm and elegant touch. The young woman, who wears a broad-brimmed hat, rests her head upon her left hand, and holds a flower in her right. Her face is full of a sweet tranquillity. The inscription written below by Rembrandt gives us the following information: "This is a portrait of my wife at the age of twenty-one, drawn the third day after we were betrothed, June 8, 1633." Vosmaer's rendering of the Dutch term *getrouwt* by the word "married" raises a question as to the authenticity of this drawing, for Rembrandt and Saskia were married, as we know, on June 22, 1634; but, as Dr. Bredius points out, *getrouwt* was also used in the sense of engaged, betrothed. We therefore fully concur with Dr. Bode, who, like Vosmaer, believes the drawing to be by Rembrandt. He justifies the attribution by arguments not merely sufficient in themselves,¹ but fully borne out by the execution, and its analogies with various etchings of this period, representing either Rembrandt himself or Saskia. We may instance a charming little portrait of the latter, dated 1634 (B. 347), drawn with a firm and skilful hand, the face in profile again, and the general appearance marked by great elegance. A fitting pendant may be found in the small portrait of the master himself: *Rembrandt with moustachios* (B. 2). It is neither signed nor dated, but from the great similarity of handling, we believe it to belong to the same year. The air of youth, of manly assurance, and of good breeding that characterise this little etching, make it one of the most attractive of the master's many renderings of himself.

Among the works of this period, many more important than these

¹ *Studien*, p. 423.



were also inspired by Saskia. Rembrandt, we know, did not wait till after his marriage to deck her according to his fancy. But now that she had become his house-mate, he brought out all the treasures of his wardrobes to vary her attire. For the next few years, she was his most frequent model, and the greater number of his pictures were directly or indirectly suggested by her. Just as in earlier days he had made use of himself and of the various members of his family, for his studies, he now took full advantage of the complaisant model by his side. We recognise Saskia's type in a picture, recently bought by M. Sedelmeyer in England. It belongs to this period, but is disfigured, unfortunately, by several repaints. The likeness to Saskia is more apparent in the picture at the Prado, Madrid, signed and dated 1634.¹ It figures in the Catalogue as *Artemisia receiving the Ashes of Mausolus*, and the title *Cleopatra at her Toilet* has also been suggested. The scene is, in fact, somewhat enigmatical; but we believe it to be probably some episode from Scripture that is represented; *Bathsheba*, the *Bride of Tobias*, or *Judith*, would perhaps more aptly describe it, as Rembrandt rarely drew his subjects from profane history, and showed a marked preference for sacred themes. The young woman, whoever she may be, is turned full to the spectator, and brilliantly illuminated. One hand is laid upon her breast, the other on a table covered with a cloth, on which is an open book. A little girl on the right hands her a small cup, shaped like a nautilus, and an old attendant, who has assisted at her toilet, is just distinguishable in the shadow of the background. She wears a rich costume, and her luxuriant hair floats upon her shoulders. The features, which are somewhat sharply accentuated, and outlined by dark shadows, look rather vulgar in the vivid light, and the only touch of elegance is in the plump and delicate hands. The harmony is high and cool in tone; the colour scheme, as in the *Jewish Bride* of the Hermitage, being made up of pale greens and silvery grays.

Two large portraits dated 1634, which form a pair, were recently

¹ This signature and date are written in white, as in the so-called *Jewish Bride* of the Hermitage, which belongs to the same year.

(in 1889) sold in America. They were at one time in the Princesse de Sagan's collection, and we believe them to represent Rembrandt and Saskia. There are differences, it is true, but the features, though somewhat more elongated, diverge but slightly from the familiar types, and we believe that the artist, here as on other occasions, has concerned himself little with exactitude of likeness, treating the works rather as studies than as portraits. The costumes in which the persons are arrayed confirm such an idea. The yellowish chemisette, worn under a low bodice with a gold trimming, the mantle, fastened both by a clasp and chain, the comb set with pearls, and the numerous jewels, we have already seen in many of Saskia's portraits, and Rembrandt's fondness for the martial accoutrements in which he figures, is attested by several earlier pictures. Both portraits have deteriorated; the opacity of the shadows, which gives them a hard and somewhat gloomy aspect, is due, no doubt, to their indifferent preservation.

The likeness to Saskia and Rembrandt is more apparent, though not very exact, in the so-called *Burgomaster Pancras and his Wife*, in the Queen's collection at Buckingham Palace. Misled by the title, Vosmaer assigned this work to the year 1645, the date of the Burgomaster's marriage. But the husband is undoubtedly Rembrandt, and in the wife's face, save that the oval is rather less pronounced, we recognise Saskia's characteristic features, her rosy mouth, her prominent forehead, and the fair hair waving above it. With Dr. Bredius, we think that the picture must have been painted about 1635.¹ The young woman sits before her mirror, dressed in a rich costume. She is putting the finishing touches to her toilet; with a somewhat affected gesture, she fastens a pearl in her ear, and contemplates the effect with a languishing air. As if she were not already sufficiently bejewelled, her husband, who stands behind her, holds a pearl necklace in readiness for further adornment. He himself wears a rich fancy costume of dark green, the tones of

¹ It is signed: *Rembrant*, and, as Dr. Bode has pointed out, this form of the signature, which appears on etchings of 1632, and on the *Susanna* of 1637, in the Hague Museum, was never used after the latter date.

which form a beautiful harmony with the vivid red of the table-cover. On this occasion Rembrandt evidently arrayed his wife himself, enriching her costume with the gorgeous draperies and jewels he had gathered together for her. His



THE BURGOMASTER PANCRAE AND HIS WIFE.

About 1635 (Buckingham Palace).

taste for such acquisitions grew with his delight in thus applying them, and he began to lavish money on the artistic treasures with which he beautified his home. Always something of a recluse, he had none of the desire for change and travel so common among his brother-painters. His world

was but some few feet in extent. It lay between the four walls of a dwelling now doubly dear, since it sheltered both his work and his affections. Some courage may perhaps have been necessary at first, to resist the various temptations that beset his youth and isolated position in a great city. But work had now become an imperious necessity to him. Impatient of all distractions, he wished for no pleasures outside his art, that art which was so closely interwoven with his life, which coloured its every transaction, and to which he turned for the expression of every emotion, profound or transient. Thus the most trifling events of his career are recorded in his pictures. He withdrew himself from the eyes of the world to give his fullest confidence to his art, and in his works his most secret thoughts are revealed to us.

In their happy solitude, forgetful of the outside world, and free from all restraints, the newly married pair found their pleasure, like children, in the merest trifles. Each day some fresh travesty and amusement was devised, some feast or comedy, where each entertained the other, and where they themselves were the sole guests and actors. But even on days like these, the painter could not be idle. He has immortalised one of these innocent orgies in the famous picture of the Dresden Gallery, where he has painted himself, with Saskia sitting on his knee. So fragile and dainty is the little bride that she looks a mere child, in spite of her twenty-two years, and her delicate charm is enhanced by contrast with Rembrandt's robust manhood. The artist is seated in a chair, dressed in a military costume, and brandishes a long glass of sparkling wine in his right hand. With his left, he clasps his wife's waist. Saskia wears a rich, but somewhat fantastic dress. Her sweet, fresh face is turned towards the spectator. Before them is a table covered with an Eastern rug, on which are a plate, and a raised pie surmounted by a peacock with out-spread tail. Rembrandt, whose eyes are slightly misty, laughs aloud, displaying both rows of teeth, and shakes his flowing hair. Saskia's face looks smaller than ever beside his great head; she might be a fairy in the grasp of a giant, confident of her own power, trustful and happy in the love she has inspired. Her expression is



calm, and she seems rather astonished than amused ; the faintest suspicion of a smile hovers about her lips. As to the master himself, his noisy gaiety is rather forced ; the part he plays seems to involve a certain degree of effort. It is evident that such junketings are not usual with him ; that he is a man of sober habits, attracted by the picturesque aspect of the scene, rather than by its appeal to gluttony and sensuality. The exquisite distinction of the harmony, made up of subdued reds and dull greens, the softness and delicacy of the chiaroscuro, the sedate and accurate execution, seem to enter an involuntary protest against Rembrandt's choice of subject.

It is difficult here to avoid an invidious comparison with Hals ; we imagine the devil-may-care vigour with which he would have endued such an episode ; and recall his rollicking picture of *Ramp and his Mistress*.¹ There, no shadow of constraint or of shame-facedness is to be found. The couple are not posing ; they have no thought for the gallery ; they are intent on their own amusement, and are enjoying themselves to their heart's content. What a well-matched pair ! With what ardour does the red-cheeked damsel press against the youth, into whose hot head the wine has already mounted ! Beside himself, his eyes aflame, he shouts at the top of his voice. A large yellow dog, infected by the excitement of his owners, thrusts his muzzle in between them, begging for a caress. The feverish brilliance of the execution is in perfect harmony with the scene. What decisive vigour in the brushing ! With what ease the master rises to the requisite pitch of intoxication ! Hals, a frequenter of taverns, had often witnessed such scenes, and delighted to reproduce them. But neither the laxity nor the bravura essential to their treatment was proper to Rembrandt's temperament. He was not at home in this domain, and indeed, made few excursions thither. In his quest for novelty, he seized, it is true, the opportunity of treating a new aspect of life, the elements of which lay ready to his hand. He loved to vary his labours in this fashion, to pass from some study undertaken for his improvement, to a carefully executed portrait, or a composition that stimulated his imagination and his creative faculties. He sought repose in change

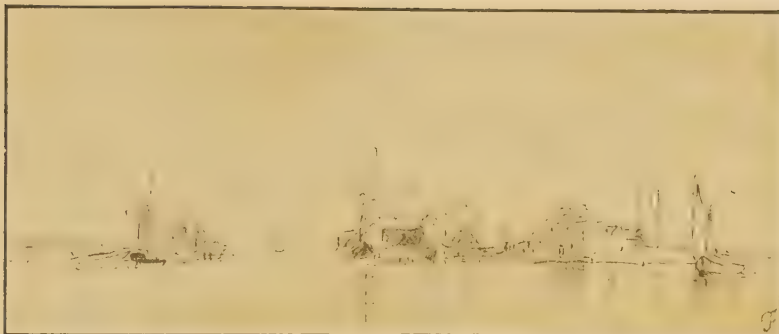
¹ Now in the possession of the Comte de Pourtalès in Paris.

of occupation ; and though in other respects he was incapable of directing or resisting the impulses of his ardent nature, he at least never failed to turn every successive phase of circumstance to account in the development of his art. The one point on which he showed himself inflexible was in exacting respect for his working hours. This was a matter in which he allowed no trifling. In the hey-day of his happiness, as throughout the cruel sufferings that awaited him, he remained the laborious, indefatigable craftsman, content with nothing short of the highest achievement, and knowing no satisfaction greater than that of entire absorption in his work.



THE CRUCIFIXION.

About 1634 (B. 80).



PEN DRAWING, HEIGHTENED WITH WASH.

(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)

CHAPTER X.

REMBRANDT'S ETCHINGS OF THIS PERIOD (1632-1639)—HIS DIVERSITY OF METHOD—STUDIES OF HIMSELF AND FAMILIAR SUBJECTS.—PORTRAIT OF J. UYTENBOGAERD—RELIGIOUS COMPOSITIONS—REMBRANDT'S COLLABORATORS—THE 'RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS,' THE 'DESCENT FROM THE CROSS,' AND THE 'ECCE HOMO'—THE THREE 'ORIENTAL HEADS'—THE 'ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE' IN THE HERMITAGE.



TWO TRAVELLING PEASANTS.

About 1634 (B. 144).

AS Rembrandt loved to vary the subjects of his studies, so, too, he took pleasure in constant change from one process to another, and in fully developing the special capacities of each. He painted, drew, and engraved in turn. In his early etchings his methods were extremely simple, in some cases consisting merely of a few strokes of the needle. Even towards the close of his career, he occasionally produced one of

these open and simple plates, eloquent in their very concision. But at the same time, he was unwearied in research and experiment bearing on the art in which he had achieved such mastery. He was thus enabled to attempt and to render effects beyond the reach of his predecessors. Learned and complex as were many of his processes, he showed none of the specialist's narrowness in their application; he made free use of them, adapting

them to the exigencies of the moment, and combining them skilfully for the purpose in view. His first consideration was the expression of his thought, and his etchings are always those of a creative artist. The impossibility of detecting his various artifices, and the extraordinary skill with which he combined and varied them, have been much insisted on. But the true secret of his success was his genius. Never relying on mere formulæ to solve difficulties or display technical mastery, he made his docile hand subservient to his commanding mind. A sketch of a few rapid lines was a sufficient record of an idea ; while in many instances, his conception of a picture was so vivid, he saw the finished work so completely in his mind's eye, that he was able to dispense entirely with preparation. Instead therefore of tracing from a preliminary drawing, after the manner of most etchers, he sketched his design directly on the copper, and, as Bartsch judiciously observes: "though this perhaps was not the surest means of producing a correct drawing, it effectually preserved all the fire of a first conception."¹ This vitality was indeed a characteristic of his execution, and in many of his works there is such a sudden and vivid quality, such an air of living warmth and movement, that the spectator feels as if he were actually looking on at their creation.

To Rembrandt one of the charms of etching was that it admits of corrections. A severe critic of his own plates, he would lay them aside altogether if they fell below his expectations, or would return to them again and again, never conceiving of them as finished ; as with several of his pictures, he overloaded too many by continual retouching. But when he held his hand at the right moment, or worked out an idea methodically, he produced masterpieces of extraordinary originality. The successive retouches, when judiciously applied, gave prodigious flexibility and diversity of effect. In his best plates the mingled audacity and self-control that characterised him find expression in marvellous variety of treatment. The touch is now harsh and abrupt, now mellow and caressing ; forms sharply indicated by a few strokes of the needle in the high lights, melt away into

¹ Bartsch, *Essai sur la Vie et les Œuvres de Rembrandt*. Vienna. 1797.

mysterious shadow; in some places the white of the paper is left almost untouched, and plays an important part in the effect; in others it disappears entirely under intense velvety blacks, strong yet transparent. Between the two extremes we note the play of exquisitely delicate modulations, an infinite variety of values, produced either by elaborate gradations of illumination, or by differences of handling. The student is amazed at the expressive power manifested with such restricted methods, at the tones of sonorous harmony the master draws from the instrument he himself created—an instrument which, answering to his every touch, enabled him to call up at will the most vivid of realities, or the most fantastic of visions.

At the period with which we are now concerned, Rembrandt, by dint of unceasing labour and unwearied experiment, had made himself completely master of the difficult art of the aquafortist. His etchings of this date display every aspect of his talent, and range from the most summary¹ sketches to the most finished compositions. He continued to take himself for his model, as he had hitherto done, and as he did indeed to the end of his career. In the plate known as *Rembrandt with a scarf*, signed and dated 1633 (B. 17), he has made his own features the pretext for a study of light. The greater portion of the head is in deep shadow, through which the eyes gleam like carbuncles, while the abruptness of the contrasts, and the somewhat truculent expression of the shaggy head, recall the little portrait in the Cassel Gallery (No. 208), one of his earliest works. In most of these studies he indulges his fancy for travesty. Thus we find him playing the grandee in a plumed cap and braided tunic, a falcon on his wrist (B. 3). This plate was no doubt ill-prepared, and consequently thrown aside by the master, for he neither signed nor dated it. The first state, which is of extreme rarity, was supplemented by some later impressions, but the coarse retouches in these are certainly not by

¹ I would take leave to remark that the broad landscape etchings—with their novel vision of the world—all belong to a later period, and that the large and luminous method adopted in the '*Clément de Jonghe*' of 1651 can hardly be said to have been anticipated twelve years before.—F. W.

his own hand. Two plates, somewhat later in the series (B. 18 and 23), are signed, and dated 1634. In the first, his expression is serious and important; he wears an ermine cape fastened closely round the throat, and a rich gold chain, and grasps a curved sword in his hand. The other, a more delicately executed piece of work, represents him in the costume of a Hungarian magnate; he wears the familiar steel gorget, and a little cap with an aigrette. The likeness is not very striking, and a small wart on the right cheek has caused it to be disputed that Rembrandt was his own model for this plate. But we know that he never adhered very closely to the original in studies of this nature, and the fanciful dress, the general appearance, and the penetrating expression of the eyes, incline us to accept it as a free rendering of his own personality.¹ It was probably his habit to keep several plates always ready to work upon; but if he chanced to be short of these he would take such as came first to hand, even if they happened to be already occupied. A little study of himself, made about 1632, of which only the face is finished (B. 363), is drawn upon a plate on which he had already scratched several heads of old men, and two beggars.

Among the members of his own circle who were his models at this period, none are already familiar to us but Saskia, of whom there is the little portrait already mentioned, with others to be later described, and his mother. An etching of the latter (B. 351) is dated 1633. It may have been executed during some brief visit to Leyden, but is more probably a variation on an earlier plate, the features and attitude bearing a strong likeness to the *Bust Portrait* of 1631 (B. 349). But in addition to these family studies, we shall find a goodly number made from persons of all ranks and ages, more especially from those old men with hooked noses and strongly marked features, of whom he found such a variety of picturesque specimens among the Jewish colony in Amsterdam. To these he turned for the types that figure as rabbis and patriarchs in his Biblical com-

¹ In the first state of this *Rembrandt with a Sword and Aigrette*, the figure is three-quarters length, and the plate is undated; in the later impressions, where the figure is reduced to the head and shoulders, and the plate cut into an oval shape, the date 1634 appears with the signature.

positions. Sometimes these studies were dashed off instantaneously in a few rapid, but purposeful strokes. The *Bald old Man with a short Beard* (B. 306), whom we shall recognise in many subsequent pictures and etchings, is a typical example of this treatment. In other instances very expressive and even elaborate work is contained in the same small dimensions, as in the little plate of *An old Woman asleep* (B. 350). Overcome

by drowsiness in the midst of her reading, she leans forward, her head resting on her hand, in a drooping attitude of wonderful truth and reality. An *Old Man with a long Beard and a Fur Cap* (B. 262) is even finer, though earlier by some years, for it bears the monogram affected by the master in 1632. The print is rich in colour, the execution peculiarly firm and frank, the rendering of the various surfaces



BUST OF REMBRANDT, IN AN OVAL.
1634 (B. 23).

—furs, velvets and stuffs—admirably suggestive, while its intimate expression of character places this etching among the most fascinating of the master's works at this period.

Another portrait, more important than that of Sylvius, is signed and dated 1635, and may be said to close this series. It represents the Remonstrant Minister, Jan Uytenbogaerd, a personage who played a great part in the religious history of Holland. Born in 1557, the famous preacher was appointed chaplain to Maurice of Nassau at the outset of his career, and had remained in the prince's service fifteen

years, accompanying him in all his military expeditions. Condemned together with the followers of Arminius at the Synod of Dort in 1618, Maurice's influence had not sufficed to save him from persecution, and he fled the country to escape from his enemies. He took refuge first at Amiens, and afterwards in Paris, till the accession of Prince Frederick Henry enabled him to return to the Hague in 1625. When Rembrandt painted him ten years later, Uytenbogaerd was seventy-eight. His features are somewhat worn, and his benevolent gaze has a touch of sadness; but his frank and open countenance bears the impress of that resolute stoicism which neither age nor suffering could quench, and to which Grotius paid a fitting tribute in the inscription he composed for the portrait: *Jactatus multum; nec tantum fractus ab annis*. The modelling and drawing are equally bold and confident; and the treatment is broad, though sufficiently elaborated. Hence the general effect is simple, and the plate, with which three of the most famous names in Dutch history are associated, worthily inaugurates that great series of etched portraits, nearly all of which may be ranked among Rembrandt's masterpieces.

The execution of these portraits brought Rembrandt into contact with some of his most distinguished countrymen. Meanwhile, his studies of the proletariat were not neglected. He loved to contemplate those scenes of popular life, the actors in which show themselves as they are, and ingenuously display their feelings, with no thought of reserves or affectations. He set himself to reflect this absolute sincerity in his renderings of the street life of Amsterdam. He shows us *Travelling Musicians* (B. 119), performers on bag-pipes and hurdy-gurdy, regaling an astonished audience with their discordant notes; or a *Ratkiller* (B. 121), triumphantly displaying the slain; or a *Mountebank* (B. 129), sword on thigh, vaunting the efficacy of his drugs; or a *Woman making Pancakes* (B. 124) in the open air, and turning her savoury compound in the boiling fat, to the delight of the street-boys round her. These were followed by *A travelling Peasant and his Wife* (B. 144) tramping in vagabond destitution through the country; another *Peasant in Rags* (B. 172) whines for



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

an alms, ready at any moment to enforce his demand with the cudgel concealed behind his back.

All these subjects were drawn lightly on the copper, either very frankly sketched from nature, or recorded when the impression of some out-door scene was fresh in the master's memory. The happy facility of the touch shows that he sought distraction in these airy trifles from the more serious works that occupied his days without wholly absorbing his activity. On the other hand, there is manifest effort in the drawings he was commissioned to make for some of the illustrated books Dutch publishers were producing in large numbers at this period. Rembrandt had no aptitude for such tasks. His illustration of Herckmans' text in the plate he engraved for that writer's poem, *The Praise of Navigation* (*Der Zeevaertlof*), should have ensured his exemption from work so little suited to his genius. His incapacity to make himself the medium of another's thoughts on given themes, especially when these were allegorical, resulted in fantastic and incoherent compositions, so obscure that it is impossible to say which particular passage of the author they are intended to illustrate. Thus Vosmaer sees in the engraving *Adverse Fortune* (1633, B. 111), his first essay in this line, a series of allusions to the life of Saint Paul, while others, more plausibly in our opinion, interpret it as dealing with the events that followed the battle of Actium, a subject also touched upon in the text.

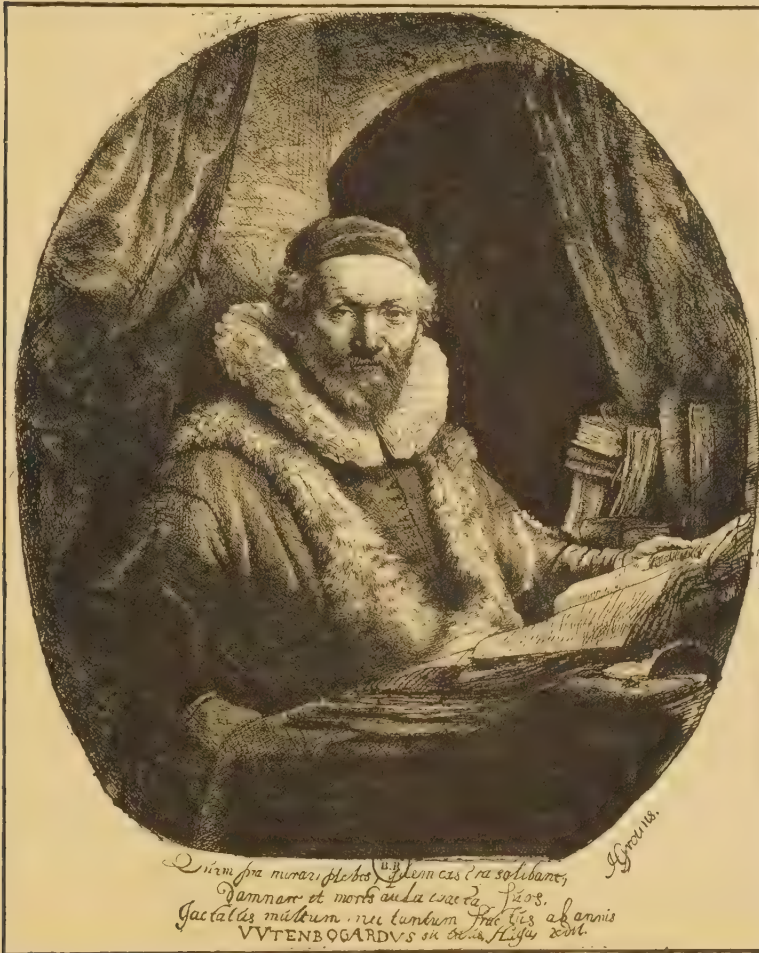
When free to choose his own themes, Rembrandt drew his inspiration mainly from the Scriptures, to him the source alike of the loftiest, and of the most purely human sentiments. Fired by his study of the sacred page, his imagination evoked the episodes he proposed to treat, and marshalled them before his eyes. He then set himself primarily to bring out their most characteristic features. In this endeavour he was often seduced into vulgarity ; he introduced details of doubtful taste, and of such excessive homeliness that our sense of fitness is outraged by their presentment in solemn scenes. But he was essentially the child of his century and of his country ; and he could not take example by strangers, or conform to received traditions. Some of the episodes that appealed most strongly to him

have already figured in his early works; we shall find that he returned to certain of them throughout his life, and that they never lost their interest for him. At times his mind would be completely possessed by some one subject, which he would take delight in treating from a variety of aspects. We know that he painted a *St. Jerome* in 1631; between 1632 and 1635 three etchings were inspired by the same theme, to which he returned more than once in later years. The earliest of these plates, a *St. Jerome kneeling* (B. 101) was probably executed towards the close of 1632, for it is signed, not with the monogram Rembrandt habitually used throughout this year, but with his full name, as he wrote it at that particular period: *Rembrant*. The other two (B. 100 and 102) are, however, both signed *Rembrandt*, and dated 1634 and 1635 respectively. In all three we find the same impossible heraldic lions, the uncouthness of which has furnished an argument against the authenticity of these plates. The argument loses its force, however, when we remember that these identical beasts figure in the picture of 1631, and in the three *Lion Hunts* (B. 114, 115 and 116) where they are scarcely more realistic, though these plates belong to the year 1641. But even at this date the master had as yet had no opportunity of studying the animals from nature. ■

Episodes from the lives of the patriarchs, notably Jacob, were also among Rembrandt's favourite subjects. The *Jacob bewailing the Death of Joseph* (B. 38) is of this period. Its authenticity has also been called in question, though both execution and signature seem to us to confirm the attribution to Rembrandt.¹ The frankness of the illumination, the simplicity of the composition, which centres in one happily arranged group, the despair of the old man, even the gestures of the brothers, and the eagerness with which they note the workings of their lie in their father's face, all proclaim the master, and we should look in vain among his pupils and disciples for an artist capable of carrying out such a conception.

¹ This signature, *Rembrant van Ryn*, connects the designation *van Ryn*, which the artist affected in 1632, with the form of the name in which the *d* is omitted, as it appears for a time from 1633 onwards. The etching, therefore, probably belongs to the end of 1632 or beginning of 1633.

Other less important plates, such as the *Little Flight into Egypt* (B. 52), *The Tribute Money* (B. 68), *The Crucifixion* (B. 80), and the *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (B. 97), are only noteworthy by reason of



PORTRAIT OF UYTENBOGAERD.

1635 (B. 279).

their picturesque qualities. We have already spoken of the *Good Samaritan* (B. 90). In the little *Disciples at Emmaüs* (B. 88) and the so-called *Samaritan Woman "with Ruins"* (B. 71), both of the year 1634, the Christ has much the same characteristics. It is a type of

singular energy, and whether seated at the modest meal at Emmäus, or on the edge of the well by which the Woman of Samaria stands, His gaze at the two apostles who have just recognised Him, and at the young woman who hangs upon His words with eager eyes, is full of the same commanding magnetism. But the air of somewhat stern authority and power that marks Rembrandt's conceptions of the Saviour at this period, is better exemplified in a *Christ driving the Money-changers from the Temple*, of 1635 (B. 69). This was a subject often treated by Rembrandt's forerunners, the early Dutch and Flemish masters, who took the opportunity of introducing those masses of vegetables, fowls and fish, which make Beuckelaer's and Pieter Aertsen's renderings of the theme mainly studies of still-life. Rembrandt, though he does not omit these details, uses them merely to emphasise the profanation of the temple. He is rather concerned to oppose the indignation of Jesus, driving the dealers before Him with rods, and their tumultuous flight, to the stolidity of the High Priest and his subordinates, who look on impassively at the traffic, tolerant of abuses so profitable to themselves.

As compared with these plates, which, in spite of their various excellences, are somewhat summary in treatment, the *Angel appearing to the Shepherds*, of 1634¹ (B. 44) is a work of considerable elaboration, and shows evidences of novel aims, together with marked technical advance. The unearthly radiance shining through the gloom, the awe of the shepherds, and the mixed feelings with which they view the miracle, the terror of the flock, and the standing angel, with outspread wings and hand stretched earthward, promising "peace to men of good will," the firmament bright with "a multitude of the heavenly host, singing 'Glory to God in the highest'"—all these were elements suggested by the text. But Rembrandt was the first so to blend them as to draw its full significance from the scene.¹ The rich infinity of the chiaroscuro, and the eloquence of the landscape, to which he gives

¹ The work was carried through with extraordinary vigour and rapidity, as we may see in the first state of this print. The sketch, a very free one, consisting only of a few strokes, merely indicates the places of the animals and figures in the foreground. Govert Flinck, who afterwards treated this subject in a picture now in the Louvre, borrowed the general arrangement of the composition and even many of its details.

greater prominence here than he had hitherto ventured upon, so impress us that we seem to behold all nature trembling at the proclamation of an event that marks a new era in human history. Side by side with broad, dense spaces, vague and shadowy in the darkness of night, vigorous silhouettes, defined by gleams of light or intense shadows, detach themselves here and there, and mysterious forms are revealed by dim reflections in the distance. Deep, velvety blacks are opposed to exquisitely delicate half-tones, and in the best impressions of this plate, every detail proclaims the intimate harmony between handling and conception only to be found in those supreme works, in which the soul of the poet breathes through the technical perfection of the artist.

Three etchings of this period have still to be noticed. They are very unequal in merit, but are among the largest of Rembrandt's plates. All three are signed by him, but their authenticity has been questioned, some refusing to see Rembrandt's hand in them at all, others supposing them to be in part by him. In considering them it will therefore be necessary to deal with the more or less active collaboration of Rembrandt's pupils and disciples in some of his works. The point has been widely discussed of late, and has given rise to much lively controversy. We propose to sum up the various opinions of serious students, and to set forth, as concisely as possible, the conclusions at which we have arrived after an impartial survey of the arguments.

It is impossible to deny the fact that Rembrandt accepted the collaboration of his pupils. Universal custom, and even the conditions of artistic apprenticeship at the period sanctioned the master's exploitation of his scholars. The statutes of the guilds, as we have seen, usually limited the apprenticeship to three years. Throughout this term, and in fact until the pupil had himself become a master in the guild, he had no right either to sign or to sell his works. But in the third year he was allowed, under certain very rigorous restrictions, to paint two or three works of which he shared the profits. All other productions belonged to his master, who, as a rule, did not fail to turn them to good account. Under such condi-

tions, Rembrandt was not called upon to show himself more scrupulous than his fellows. In the earlier works produced at Leyden, however, we think it impossible that he could have found collaborators among his scholars. The only pupil we can positively assign to him at this date was Gerard Dou, who never practised engraving. As to Willem de Poorter, his apprenticeship to Rembrandt has never been established. He certainly made copies of the master's works,¹ and, like many others, was greatly influenced by him, as we see in his pictures. But there is nothing to prove that De Poorter ever received direct instruction from Rembrandt, and the assumption is in no wise borne out by the little we know of his life. A native of Haarlem, Willem de Poorter was not only himself a member of the Guild of St. Luke in 1635, but had a pupil, Pieter Castelein, whose name he also caused to be inscribed on the list.² Besides which, De Poorter was no engraver, and the two etchings formerly ascribed to him on the strength of their signature, P. D. W., have been restored to P. de Witt by general consent. The only other names that can be admitted in this connection among Rembrandt's intimates at Leyden are those of J. Lievens and J. van Vliet, and we know that neither was his pupil.

As regards his sojourn at Amsterdam, however, we have the testimony of Joachim Sandrart, his contemporary, who thus alludes to his industry and his gains: "His house at Amsterdam was frequented by numerous pupils of good family, each of whom paid him as much as a hundred florins yearly, exclusive of his profits from their pictures and engravings, which, in addition to his personal gains, brought him in some 2,000 to 2,500 florins." Such evidence is convincing; but, as Sandrart gives neither dates nor names, it is necessary to inquire to what period of the master's career he here refers. Houbraken, who quotes Sandrart's text on this point, remarks that Sandrart was likely to be well informed, as he was personally known to Rembrandt. Now it was from 1637 to 1641 that Sandrart lived in Amsterdam, and collected the precious information contained

¹ Notably one from the *Presentation in the Temple* of the Mauritshuis. This copy bears the date 1631, and is in the Dresden Museum.

² Van der Willigen, *Les Artistes de Haarlem*, p. 245. 1870.

in the supplement to his reminiscences, the first edition of which was not published till some time afterwards.¹ The period with which Sandrart deals was therefore the time when he was in personal



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS

1634 (B. 44).

communication with Rembrandt, some years later than that with

¹ The first edition, which was published in German, appeared in 1675, under the title of *Academia nobilissimæ artis pictoriæ* (Nuremberg). After his departure from Amsterdam, the information touching Dutch artists collected by Sandrart was of a vague and desultory description. In many instances he did not know what had become of the painters of whom he was writing, nor whether they were living or dead.

which we are now concerned, and a question of dates is involved, which has been somewhat laxly treated hitherto. Among the pupils mentioned by Mr. Seymour Haden as possible collaborators of the master on his arrival at Amsterdam is Govert Flinck. Flinck was certainly one of the first of his pupils, but he never engraved. Ferdinand Bol, another of Rembrandt's earliest scholars, no doubt became his assistant in due course, but when he entered the studio (in 1632 at the earliest) he was barely sixteen,¹ and can scarcely have given much help to his master till some years later. Philips de Koninck was not twelve years old in 1632, and Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout was only ten. Lievens, though in no sense a pupil of Rembrandt's, was on such terms of friendship with him, that he might very possibly have been his collaborator. But, as we have already shown, Lievens had left Holland. Mr. Seymour Haden has disputed this fact. He declares that there are no traces of Lievens' sojourn in England, nor of any works there executed by him, though Houbraken, speaking of his departure for Great Britain in 1631, adds explicitly that "he spent three years there, and painted portraits of the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales." There exists further an engraving by L. Vorsterman after a portrait by Lievens, of Nicholas Lanière, director of music at the English Court. In an inscription on this plate, composed by Lievens, the painter extols the cultivated taste and the talents of Charles I.'s favourite, and speaks of Lanière as his "Mæcenas." Mr. Seymour Haden might have found further proof among Lievens' own etchings. A remarkable plate (B. 59), very delicately etched from another of his own portraits, represents Jacob Gouter, lute-player of the Chapel Royal, to whom the artist "dedicates this souvenir of his constant friendship." Houbraken's very precise statement, supported as it is by these two works, cannot be questioned, and as this finally disposes of Lievens' claims, Joris van Vliet remains the only possible collaborator. A careful examination

¹ The year 1610 was supposed to be the date of his birth until quite recently, when Mr. Veth, in the course of his successful researches among the archives of Dort, discovered that he was really born in 1616. *Oud-Holland*, 1888, p. 68.

of the three large plates which gave rise to this discussion will show, that in two at least, Van Vliet was probably Rembrandt's assistant.

The first of the three, the *Resurrection of Lazarus*, we not only believe to be the work of Rembrandt, but hold also that it was entirely executed by his hand. The monogram with the affix: van Ryn, which forms the signature, seems to us to be alike a confirmation of its authenticity, and an indication of the period to which it belongs, for this monogram was mainly used by the master about 1632. The composition and execution strongly support this hypothesis. The attitude of the Saviour is undoubtedly somewhat theatrical, and as Charles Blanc remarks, the master seems to suggest that the miracle was the result of some "sublime incantation." But such a conception agrees perfectly with his idea of the Christ at this period, and the air of power and authority with which he has endued Him, characterises the various other prints above described. We cannot therefore agree with Mr. Seymour Haden that Rembrandt probably borrowed the idea of his composition from two pictures of the *Resurrection of Lazarus* by J. de Wet, one of which is now at the Hermitage, the other in the Darmstadt Museum, the latter dated 1633. These pictures, which we know, differ essentially from Rembrandt's work, and are in fact considerably later in date. It was, indeed, unlikely that Rembrandt should have been indebted to De Wet for his conception. The subject was one which had long attracted him. Even in the Leyden days, it had engaged both himself and his fellow-students. Van Vliet had treated it with his usual coarseness in one of his first plates (B. 4) and Lievens used it both for a picture, recently in Mr. Willett's collection at Brighton, and for one of his best engravings (B. 3). As to Rembrandt, he had twice attempted the rendering of this, an episode so well suited to his powers, before the production of the large plate: once in a pen-drawing now in the Boymans Museum, and again in an early picture, a small panel painted about 1628, and lately acquired by M. Sedelmeyer. In the latter the Saviour stands over the grave, one arm outstretched; at his feet Lazarus struggles to rise, in an awkward, but expressive attitude. In the print,

Rembrandt introduces many details of this composition—several of the by-standers, and accessories such as the quiver, the turban, and the Eastern sword which then formed part of his little collection of "properties."¹ But he has remodelled it very successfully, treating it with greater breadth and simplicity. We note however the same exaggerated pantomime among the spectators, the somewhat forced gestures of astonishment and enthusiasm, we have already pointed out in some of the early works, notably the *Presentation in the Temple* of 1628, in the Weber collection at Hamburg. But we look in vain for those conflicting evidences which have led authorities such as Mr. Seymour Haden and Mr. Middleton-Wake to discover, the first the hand of Bol and of Lievens, the second that of Van Vliet, directed by the master. In our opinion Rembrandt is the sole author of the plate, and he alone could have conceived and so eloquently expressed the stupendous miracle, its effects upon the various by-standers, and above all, the figure of Lazarus, in whose features we note at once exhaustion, suffering, the horror of that death from which he has just been snatched, and the returning life which gradually quickens his enfeebled limbs. Before this creation, one of the most striking produced by the artist, in spite of certain blemishes, we understand and share the admiration so warmly expressed by Alfred Tonnellé: "The omnipotent gesture of the Saviour, whose figure is brilliantly illuminated, is sublime, and everything tends to heighten the general effect; the radiant, unearthly light, striking down into the tomb; the pallid corpse rising slowly, in amazement at the splendour that has penetrated his cerements; the gestures of the bystanders, who draw back, dazzled by the blaze of glory, or press forward in transports of delight as the dead man moves. Never was the divine work of resurrection so majestically rendered!"²

We have mentioned the *Descent from the Cross* painted for the *Stathouder* in 1633. Rembrandt was evidently pleased with the composition, for he reproduced it almost immediately in a large etching, very elaborately and delicately executed, which he also dated

¹ These accessories also appear in De Wet's picture in the Hermitage, and in Lievens' plate.

² Alfred Tonnellé, *Fragments sur l'Art et la Philosophie*, p. 177. Paris. 1860.

1633, signing it with his name, spelt without the d, as we find it on several works of this period. Unhappily, the ground was so imperfectly prepared, that the work suffered greatly in the process



ECCE HOMO.
1636 (B. 77).

of biting, and was even completely destroyed in parts. Only three impressions were taken; the time and trouble bestowed on the plate had proved to be labour in vain, and Rembrandt, who was so fully occupied with other undertakings, shrank from a repetition of the

task. But though he himself abandoned the enterprise, it is very conceivable that he should have commissioned another to carry it out under his direction, hoping to derive some profit from the plate. The originality of the conception, and the author's reputation, ensured it a favourable market. Saskia's cousin, Hendrick van Uylenborch, undertook the publication of this second print, the dimensions of which differed but little from those of the first. It was inscribed with the publisher's name, and with that of Rembrandt, this time correctly spelt, and followed by the words: *cum privil.* in assertion of the rights he had reserved to himself in the undertaking. The most cursory comparison of this copy with the original impression in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* will suffice to show the notable differences between the two. Where, on the one hand, all is ease and freedom, we find on the other the stiffness, monotony, and constraint of imitation. The violent contrasts of blacks and whites, and a certain coarseness of touch further betray the hand of Van Vliet, for we agree with Mr. Middleton-Wake, that the execution of the later plate may almost certainly be ascribed to him. Van Vliet seems to have settled in Amsterdam at about the same date as Rembrandt, and the intimate relations existing between them for many years past naturally marked him out for the master's assistant. The choice of Van Vliet as his interpreter was one which Rembrandt found, on the whole, little cause to regret, thanks, no doubt, to his own vigilant surveillance. Notwithstanding the gulf that divides the two, Van Vliet's plate is one of his best, and after a few retouches, Rembrandt thought it not unworthy of his own signature.

The master had some grounds for hesitation, however, when he placed his name beneath an *Ecce Homo* (B. 77) produced a little later. Here it might have been prudent to claim only the honours of conception. A *grisaille* belonging to Lady Eastlake, in which the composition is reversed, formally attests Rembrandt's authorship. It is of great interest, having evidently been drawn by the master for the guidance of his collaborator. Some portions, such as the head of Christ, and the main group, are very carefully elaborated, while others are treated in a most summary manner; the features

of persons in the confused crowd that gathers in the deep shadows of the middle distance are not even suggested. But the general arrangement, the distribution of the light, the style of the architecture, and the surging, tumultuous crowd, agitated by passions so diverse, are such as Rembrandt alone could have conceived in dealing with the episode. On the other hand, the execution betrays the inferiority of the copyist even more unmistakably than in the *Descent from the Cross*. A trial proof pulled before the completion of the plate reveals his almost mechanical methods. Working from the two extremities of the copper towards the middle, he has drawn the shadows cast by various objects before depicting the objects themselves. Another proof, in the second state, belonging to the British Museum, shows corrections made with broad sweeping strokes of the brush to enrich the tonality of the print in certain places, and approximate its values and effects more closely to those of the *grisaille*. These corrections are indubitably by the master's hand. It is even possible that he may have re-touched the plate here and there, as, for instance, in several figures of the central group and the foreground. But the execution as a whole is quite unworthy of Rembrandt, as Mr. Seymour Haden and Mr. Middleton-Wake have agreed. It is indeed unworthy even of Lievens, to whom the former critic is disposed to attribute it. We think with Mr. Middleton-Wake that the coarse drawing, the ugly types, the clumsy, heavy handling, all reveal the touch of Van Vliet, and are instinct with that vulgarity which marks his other engravings of this period. Such a production probably convinced Rembrandt that it would be well to rely no further on such an interpreter, and we believe this to have been the last plate on which he employed Van Vliet.¹ He was about to find disciples, Bol, for instance, who proved more docile as interpreters, and whose more refined and supple intellects better fitted them to grasp and to translate his ideas.

But even at the period when he was surrounded by a numerous band of efficient scholars, Rembrandt never admitted them to

¹ We learn from the inventory of 1656 that the master had a cupboard in his studio full of Van Vliet's engravings from his designs, pictures, or etchings.

any very extensive participation in his works. The peculiar quality of his genius was not such as to gain much by collaboration. He had none of the practical talent which enabled Rubens to profit openly by the labours of a trained body of assistants, each prepared for his special task, in conjunction with whom he found it possible to undertake such vast enterprises as the Medicis series, the great



BUST PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN.

By Lievens (B. 26).

canvases of Antwerp Cathedral, and of the Jesuits' Church, and the Whitehall decorations. Rembrandt's art, always intensely individual and somewhat mysterious, lent itself ill to the intervention of others. As Dr. Bode has justly remarked, he was incapable of utilising the work of his pupils. In a copy from one of his own pictures, *Abraham's Sacrifice*, which he retouched, we find him sweeping away all his

disciple's work by a few broad strokes of the brush. It is not surprising therefore, that Rubens rarely put his name to a picture, while Rembrandt almost invariably signed his. It was his habit to vary the form of his signature on works not entirely by his own hand, as if declining to accept the full responsibility for them. Hence the legends: *cum privileg.* or *Rembrandt inventor* already noted on several etchings, also the more enigmatical inscription on three plates, as to which the most contradictory solutions have been proposed. We refer to the three *Oriental Heads* dated 1635 (B. 286, 287, and 288). On these is inscribed beside the name Rembrandt, a word in very minute characters which was long read as *Venetiis*, and adduced in

support of the tradition that Rembrandt visited Venice in 1635. M. Charles Blanc, protesting against this groundless hypothesis, made a fresh attempt to decipher the word, and proposed to read it *Renetus* (of the Rhine) the Latin form of *van Ryn*, a solution which, though no nearer the truth, had at least more appearance of probability. The word, as Vosmaer was the first to discover, is really the Dutch participle *geretuckerdt*

(retouched), and this pronouncement gives the key to another difficulty in connection with the plates—namely, that all three are also to be found among Lievens' etchings (B. 18, 20, 21) —the first reversed, the second in duplicate right and left, and the third in facsimile. M. Dutuit makes the very plausible suggestion that Lievens' plates were the originals, that Rembrandt gave them to his pupils to copy, and corrected their replicas. His signature would in this case merely assert that the plates have been retouched by



!THE MAN IN A MEZETIN CAP.
About 1635 (B. 289).

him. The scratches in the background show that he made use of a sheet of copper on which another drawing had been begun; he can therefore have attached no great importance to them. M. Dutuit anticipates the only objection to this explanation, namely, that Rembrandt and Lievens were no longer in close communication as formerly, Lievens having taken up his abode in Antwerp after his return from England. His sojourn at Antwerp lasted from

1635 to 1640. But he may possibly have visited Amsterdam, in which city he afterwards settled; or he may simply have sent the plates to his old friend. A detail which seems to support M. Dutuit's conjecture is, that the facial type in two of the plates is that of Rembrandt's father, a fact which would give them a peculiar interest for the master. Nor were these the only plates exchanged by the two artists. There is a fourth which appears among the works of each. This is the charming *Man in a Mezetin Cap* (B. 289) which Rembrandt probably etched in 1635. In Lievens' version (B. 26), the face is beardless; but the composition is reversed; and the attitude, the costume, the head-dress, and the upper part of the face are identical, while, as regards the execution there is little to choose in point of skill. Here again Rembrandt has merely initialed the copy, in which he has sacrificed strict fidelity to picturesqueness of detail, adding the beard, and some stray locks of hair, indicated by a few skilful touches.

The two friends never lost sight of one another. They were no doubt pleased to renew their former intimacy, when Lievens renounced his wandering life, and settled at Amsterdam shortly after 1643. Rembrandt, we know, had a sincere admiration for his compatriot's talent, as the inventory of 1656 sufficiently proves. It records his possession of a book of prints by Lievens, and no less than nine pictures, among them a *Resurrection of Lazarus*¹ and an *Abraham's Sacrifice*. The latter, which was eulogised by Philip Angel in his *Praise of Painting* so early as 1632, represents the patriarch clasping Isaac tenderly in his arms, and looking gratefully upwards to the Lord who has preserved his son.

Abraham's Sacrifice was one of the Biblical episodes most affected by the *Italianisers*. But the moment they usually chose was not that treated by Lievens. Their theme was more often the Angel staying the hand of the patriarch. This was the point in the drama which also appealed to Rembrandt, not only as the most impressive, but as lending itself most readily to those effects of chiaroscuro which had such fascination for him. The life-size picture in the Hermitage,

¹ Probably the picture owned by Mr. Willett of Brighton.

inspired by this episode and painted in 1635, is among his most important works. The composition is extremely striking. In the foreground, Isaac is stretched almost naked at his father's feet. The patriarch, unable to bear the look of his pleading eyes, and anxious to spare him the sight of the blade, covers the youth's face with one broad hand, while from the other the knife falls at the sudden intervention of the heavenly messenger. Vosmaer, who knew the picture only from drawings and engravings, doubted its authenticity. But the transparent softness of the half-tones on the angel's face, and on the lad's bare legs, the skilful modelling of the naked body, the building up of the high lights, and the delicate flexibility with which they follow the play of the surfaces, the high-toned harmony of the draperies, the fresh, cool tints of which—pale greens, pearly grays, subdued blues and yellows—recall those of the *Jewish Bride* of 1634 hanging close by—are all characteristic notes of this period. We may further mark the scrupulous study of nature evinced in details such as the angel's wings, which the master has painted from the tawny plumage of some bird of prey. Carefully as these details are rendered, however, they are no mere servile reproductions. In his interpretations of nature, Rembrandt keeps the exigencies of his own conception steadily in view. His progress is very marked in this respect. It was in his own rich imagination that he composed the scene, and brought its most striking aspects into prominence, conceived the bold cast of the angel's head, and the expression of uncertainty on the patriarch's venerable face, combined in graduated harmonies the deep azure of the sky, the greenish blue of the horizon, and the sustained tones of the rock, against which the body of the youthful victim stands out in pathetic relief.

The immediate success of this work was not surprising. So greatly was it admired that a replica, now in the Munich Pinacothek (No. 332 in the Catalogue), was executed by a pupil under Rembrandt's directions the following year. It is of the same size as the original, and affords fresh evidence of the scruples felt by Rembrandt with regard to the circulation of such reproductions, even when worked over by himself. He has again been careful to record below this copy that

he had only re-touched and slightly modified his pupil's work. The inscription on the canvas runs as follows :

Rembrandt verandert En overgeschildert 1636.

REMBRANDT'S INSCRIPTION.

These replicas are not of frequent occurrence in his *œuvre*. We have already noted those of the *Entombment* and the *Descent from the Cross*. In the inventory of 1656 a few such canvases are enumerated ; among them are a *Good Samaritan*, a *Flagellation*, and a sketch of the *Crucifixion*. Besides these there are a certain number of still-life studies, of the kind known as *Vanitas*, in which the master's corrections are visible, but which he apparently never tried to sell. While admitting the occasional collaboration of his pupils, we think it necessary to show that it was less important than has been supposed, especially at this period. We agree with Dr. Bode that modern criticism has been inclined to overshoot the mark in dealing with this question.



A RAGGED PEASANT.

About 1635 (B. 172).



PEN DRAWING, WASHED WITH INK.
(Berlin Print Room).

CHAPTER XI.

DOMESTIC LIFE—SKETCHES AND ETCHINGS MADE BY REMBRANDT FROM SASKIA AND HIMSELF—PORTRAITS AND PICTURES FROM 1635 TO 1640—‘GANYMEDE,’ AND REMBRANDT’S MYTHOLOGICAL COMPOSITIONS—THE ‘DANAË’ IN THE HERMITAGE—‘SUSANNA AT THE BATH’ AND THE ‘MARRIAGE OF SAMSON’—STUDIES OF STILL-LIFE—THE BOOK OF TOBIT—ETCHINGS OF THIS PERIOD—THE ‘DEATH OF THE VIRGIN.’



DRAWING, WASHED WITH INDIAN INK.
(British Museum.)

DURING the summer of 1635, Saskia visited her relations in Friesland, and on July 12, she was present at the baptism of a child of Hiskia's. It is not improbable that Rembrandt accompanied her. He loved the country, and he would naturally have taken pleasure in revisiting the scenes among which they had been united the year before. The visit, however, must have been a brief one, for Saskia was herself about to become a mother. Her first child was a

boy, who was baptized Rombertus, after his maternal grandfather, in the Oude-Kerk of Amsterdam, December 15, 1635.

Saskia's brother-in-law, Frans Copal, was the chosen godfather. But his journey to Amsterdam was prevented, probably by the bad weather, and the Sylviuses were his proxies at the ceremony. The advent of his first-born must have filled Rembrandt's heart with feelings hitherto unknown. He was able to watch the awakening of life in the little creature, and to study its movements in all their expressive helplessness. He did not fail to take advantage of the tiny model, and made innumerable drawings of its attitudes and gestures. Many sketches from nature which probably belong to this period, show the child in various aspects of its baby life. We see it pressing against its nurse's bosom, and feeding with gluttonous delight; or stiff and replete in its tight swaddling-clothes; or kicking merrily before a blazing fire; or sound asleep.¹

The master had now a new attraction in the retired life he loved, and cared less than ever to leave his home. Seated side by side round the light at evening, he and his wife occupied themselves, the one in drawing or engraving, the other in needlework. The artist has recorded some such moment of deep and intimate bliss in a charming print dated 1636 (B. 19). He was never weary of reproducing his beloved Saskia's features, and three other plates, the first dated 1636 (B. 365), the second (B. 367), executed probably the same year, and the third (B. 368) in 1637, are covered with sketches, in each of which some variation of pose, costume, or illumination is introduced, the exact likeness to the model being nowhere very scrupulously observed. During the first year of their marriage, Saskia further inspired him in the execution of the more important plate known as the *Great Jewish Bride* (B. 340). It represents a young woman with masses of flowing hair, seated, and holding a roll of paper. The type, however, differs considerably from that of Saskia; the mouth is large, the lips compressed, and the face more angular. But a sketch in the Stockholm Museum was evidently Rembrandt's rough draft for this

¹ The courtesy of Mr. G. Upmark, Director of the Stockholm Museum, has enabled us to reproduce some of the drawings in the establishment. These, as we shall show later on, probably formed part of the collection made by the marine-painter, Van de Cappelle, which was afterwards acquired by Crozat, and finally by the Comte de Tessin, the Swedish ambassador in Paris.

composition. The figure is reversed, and the attitude, the hand grasping the roll of paper, the pillar, and the portion of an arch in the background, even the ample wrapper in which the young woman is draped, are exactly reproduced. In the etching, however, Rembrandt has thrown a fur-trimmed mantle over her shoulders, and has slightly exaggerated the wild expression of his strange creation, and the luxuriant masses of hair that fall about her face.¹ Two years later, Saskia's dainty features reappear in an etching of 1638, known as the *Little Jewish Bride* (B. 342).

Rembrandt, in fact, treated Saskia as he had treated himself, and made her his model on every possible occasion. She occupies the most prominent place in his works of this period, and from 1636 to 1642 his own portrait only appears three times, two of these portraits being etchings, very freely treated. He continued to adopt the martial aspect he had affected in so many fancy studies, and figures in a military costume in the plate known as *Rembrandt in a cap with a feather*, dated 1638 (B. 20), as also in the *Rembrandt in a flat cap*, probably of the same year (B. 26). But for the very characteristic cast of his features, it would be difficult to recognise him in this warlike gear. On the other hand, he has given us one of his most individual renderings of himself in the *Rembrandt leaning on a stone sill* (B. 21), dated 1639. The costume, though fanciful, is extremely simple: a velvet cloak with a straight collar, and a cap set jauntily on one side. The head, which is turned nearly full face to the spectator, has none of the commanding airs the painter sometimes assumed before his mirror. Encircled by its luxuriant hair, it impresses by virtue of its power, its intelligence, and its perfect self-possession. Here we have no weather-beaten soldier, but an artist, an observer, whose keen, questioning gaze fascinates us. This Rembrandt knows life, though adversity has not yet touched him. Strength and concentration of mind, no less than of

¹ With Mr. Middleton-Wake, we take the unsigned replica of this plate, catalogued by Bartsch as *A Study for the Great Jewish Bride* (No. 341), to be the work of a pupil in Rembrandt's studio. The authenticity of the original has been called in question by Mr. Kohler, author of a catalogue of works by Rembrandt exhibited at Boston in 1887. But in our opinion its genuineness is fully attested by the Stockholm sketch.

vision, have emphasised that vertical furrow between the brows already noted, which deepened more and more with age. The work is of the most exquisite quality, the execution simple, yet masterly, at once reticent and subtle. It would be impossible to suggest either addition or suppression; the full maturity both of man and artist is made manifest. Among all the master's renderings of himself, this has become the most popular, and public judgment has been well advised for once in adopting it as the most characteristic expression of Rembrandt's genius and personality.

The painted portraits of this period are almost entirely confined to members of the artist's immediate circle. Among the few exceptions are two portraits of old women. The earlier dated 1635, was in the possession of Mr. Lesser, the London dealer, in 1889. It represents an old lady of some seventy years, seated, and painted three-quarters length and life-size. She wears a dress of black damask with velvet epaulettes, a cap with small ear-pieces, and a white ruff and cuffs. The features are commonplace, but the face has a pleasant frankness, and the complexion is fresh and ruddy, very luminous in the high tones, and transparent in the shadows and their reflections. The other portrait, that of an old woman in a white cap, also dressed in black, belongs^{to} to M. Alphonse de Rothschild, and was painted about 1635—1636. The execution is careful and minute. The wrinkled face has preserved that sweetness which is the beauty of old age. The next in order are two portraits of young women. One, in Lord Ellesmere's collection, painted about 1634—1635, represents a fair-haired sitter with a somewhat faded complexion. She wears a dark dress, relieved by a double row of lace. The face is refined and intelligent, but unhappily, the picture is in very poor condition, and the shadows have probably darkened. The other portrait, which is known as the *Woman of Utrecht*—it has been for many years in the possession of the Weede van Dyckveld family of that city—is signed and dated 1639. The young lady stands almost facing the spectator, in a costume both elegant and simple: a black dress with loops and embroideries of dull gold, cuffs and epaulettes of white lace, and a flat collar edged with a double

row of lace. She wears a necklace and large ear-rings of pearls, and holds a fan with ribbons in her hand. Her eyes beam with frank good-nature; the large hands and the fresh colour bespeak health. The broad yet careful handling is that of the portrait of Martin Daey's wife, with greater freedom, but the colouring has been injured by an early restoration, and has lost its brilliance and harmony. The careful execution and the sobriety of the costumes in these

portraits show them to have been commissioned by the sitters, while on the other hand, we are inclined to consider the portrait of a young woman in the Cassel Gallery (No. 216 in the Catalogue) as a study made at about the same time from some friend or relation of Saskia's, basing such a supposition on the absence of any signature, and on the fanciful dress,



PEN SKETCH.
Stockholm Print Room).

one of the master's properties, which he has himself arranged on the sitter. The garb is both picturesque and original. A fur mantle is worn over a greenish dress, with a white chemisette cut low at the neck. A scarf with a deep fringe is drawn round the shoulders. The hair, neck, and ears are adorned with pearls, and the gloved left hand holds two pinks. The pale complexion and red lips, the long nose, thickening slightly towards the tip, the small eyes, and the reddish hair that waves about the face, make up a type of no particular beauty. But the wistful expression, and a certain air of astonishment give that effect of strange actuality in which Rembrandt excelled.

The male portraits of this period represent for the most part the

painter's family friends. The Minister Swalmius of the Dudley collection, painted by the master in 1637, is a grave personage of severe aspect (probably some acquaintance of the Sylviuses), who pauses in his reading, and looks up at the spectator. The Bridgwater House portrait, painted in 1637, represents another minister, a handsome, delicately-featured old man in a furred green robe, seated at a table. We cannot agree with Dr. Bode in his identification of Rembrandt himself with the life-size full-length of a man, dated 1639, in the Cassel Museum (No. 217 in the Catalogue) which long passed for a portrait of Jan Six. The type has certainly nothing in common with that of the famous burgomaster, who was soon to become Rembrandt's friend. But neither can we discover any likeness to the artist, either in the shape of the face, the hair, or the expression. The sitter, who leans against a wall beside an engaged pedestal, surmounted by an antique bust, is fashionably dressed in a black velvet costume with ribbons, and a black hat. He has the appearance of some wealthy citizen of artistic tastes, sedate and self-satisfied. The somewhat vulgar head, the expressionless eyes, the careful and minute execution of the dress—the gradations of the blacks are admirable in their vigour and variety—all proclaim this work one of the few portraits painted by Rembrandt on commission at this period. On no occasion, as far as we know, did the master represent himself thus, at full-length, in the conventional costume of the day, renouncing all those problems of chiaroscuro and effects of costume which he delighted to introduce into his own portraits. Nor was he at all likely to have made such a departure at this point of his career. He was rejoicing in his independence, and gladly throwing off those restraints to which he had unwillingly submitted when, as a new comer in Amsterdam, he had his reputation to make and his pockets to line. He was now famous; Saskia's dowry and his own earnings had made him independent. Jealous of his liberty, he was not often persuaded to meet the demands of the public. When he posed before his mirror he gave free rein to his fancy, and had no thought beyond his own satisfaction or instruction. This is sufficiently proved by the many studies of himself painted at this period, which we must be



Printed by Ludes & Chassepot Paris (France)

content merely to enumerate. The first is a picture in the Cassel Museum (No. 215 in the Catalogue) signed, and dated 1634. His shoulders are slightly drawn up towards his ears. He is wrapped in a reddish mantle, and wears a curiously shaped plumed helmet of polished steel, which casts a transparent shadow over his ruddy face. Two bust portraits in the Wallace collection, signed, but not dated, must have been painted from about 1633 to 1635. The execution of the first is broad yet delicate; the head is turned to the right; the costume is a velvet cape with fur-trimmed collar. In the second, a hastier and more sketchy study, the master faces the spectator; on his head is a brown cap, and round his neck the familiar steel gorget and a gold chain. A charming portrait of 1634, one of Rembrandt's most attractive renderings of his own personality, is in the Berlin Museum. Another, of about the same date, is in the Hague Museum. Here the face is almost in profile. The master wears a black velvet cap with a vandyked brim. The upper part of the face is in shadow; the lips are parted; the curled moustache and resolute expression give a martial air to the head. A full-face study in the Pitti Palace, painted in the same year, or perhaps in 1635, shows the artist in a large black cap; a cloak is thrown over the steel gorget and gold chain of earlier portraits. The fine condition of the beautiful and important picture of 1635, in the Liechtenstein Gallery, gives full effect to the delicacy of the chiaroscuro. The Louvre owns a portrait signed, and dated 1637. The expression of the face is calm and gentle. On the head is a black velvet cap; there are pearls in the ears, and round the shoulders an embroidered mantle, fastened across the breast with a clasp. Finally, we have the National Gallery portrait of 1640, in which the artist wears a broad cap, with vandyked brim, a gold-embroidered gray doublet with a close-fitting collar, and an over-dress of brown, striped with yellow. The fresh, ruddy face looks out from the canvas with an alert and somewhat ironical expression. The handling is very elaborate, and slightly cold in effect.

In most of these portraits, Rembrandt shows his partiality for the military disguises he had affected in his earlier studies of himself. They were, in fact, exercises, treated with more

or less of freedom, in which he paid small attention to the actual likeness. Allowing therefore for certain slight differences which may perhaps be explained by the dimensions—the figure is rather larger than life—we think we can detect the master himself in the martial accoutrements of the *Standard-Bearer*, a high-toned, transparent picture in M. Édouard de Rothschild's collection. It bears Rembrandt's signature, and the first three figures (163) of a date, which, judging from the execution, we take to have been 1636. In the somewhat coarse features of the veteran, his thick nose, sturdy neck, and unruly locks we trace the master's own type, modified and enlarged to suit the character affected. Thus disguised, a high cap throwing its shadow over his rubicund face, a sword by his side, one hand on his hip, the other grasping a standard, the model remains a peaceful citizen, who looks more like a frequenter of taverns than a hero. He may perhaps have borne his banner in a parade, but fortunately for him, he has never been called upon to defend it. We profess no less scepticism as to the nationality of the so-called *Sobieski* in the Hermitage, dated 1637. The apparent age of the model at this date disposes of the identification with Sobieski, which seems to have been one of those fanciful conjectures so freely hazarded at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century. Thus, every old woman painted by Rembrandt and his pupils was dubbed *Rembrandt's Mother*, while other portraits received the no less apocryphal names of *Rembrandt's Gilder*, *Rembrandt's Cook*, etc. The master's portrait of himself in the Pitti Palace is christened *Count de Horn* on an engraved reproduction by Golgano Cipriani; the portrait of Rembrandt's father was engraved by R. Savery under the startling title of *Mahomet*, and on an old English print of the *Standard-Bearer* is inscribed the even more curious legend *William Tell*. The vigorous but rather vulgar type of the so-called *Sobieski* is not unlike that of the *Standard-Bearer*. He has the same massive head and neck, the same blunt nose, the same fulness of flesh, the same expression in the eyes, the same high colour. He holds a gold-headed stick in his hand, and the main difference is in the attitude and costume. But the fantastic high cap, the fur tippet, the red robe,



and the curiously wrought pendant that hangs from the gold chain on his breast suggest a masquerade, and we have an instinctive feeling that the wearer of this suspicious disguise is a sham Pole. A closer examination convinces us that we have seen Rembrandt himself wearing the heavy gold chain, the pearl earrings, and the ornament in the cap, and finally, we are led to conclude with M. Mantz that Rembrandt himself was the original of this "fancy Muscovite." Admitting a certain puerility in the disguise, we may justly call attention to the breadth of treatment in this powerful portrait, and to the vigour of chiaroscuro and richness of colour so admirably suggestive of the character and expression depicted.

In addition to portraits more or less in the nature of studies, such as the above, a large number of studies in the stricter sense of

the term belong to this period. We may instance the boldly painted head of 1635, formerly in the San Donato collection, now in the possession of Mr. L. Goldschmidt. The model was probably some workman. The face is of a plebeian type, the hair dishevelled, the dress poor and plain. Such studies were, however, generally made from models the master picked up among the Jewish population of Amsterdam. In the streets close at hand, he was able to choose at will among those types of old men with hooked noses and strongly marked features he noted for use in future compositions. They also



STUDY OF SASKIA, AND OTHER HEADS.

1636 (B. 365).

gave him opportunities for the display of rich draperies and military accoutrements. Some such accessory added to a study, transformed the model into a hero of sacred history. Labelled in somewhat random fashion with Scriptural names, the works were more readily disposed of, and such a designation often enhanced the success of a brilliantly executed study. We may note as typical examples the studies of heads belonging to the Duke of Bedford (Woburn Abbey), Lord Derby, Sir Philip Miles, and Count Nostitz of Prague; also an old man (signed, and dated 1633) in the Munich Pinacothek, and another in the Belvedere at Vienna, who no doubt gained the title *St. Paul* from the sword hanging on the wall beside him.¹ But the most famous of these studies is the *Rabbi* at Chatsworth, dated 1635, which represents an old man with massive features, painted almost full face. He wears a high turban and a rich mantle, fastened by a large metal clasp, and sits before a table, on which are some books, his hands upon his breast. Behind him, in the background of the oratory, there is a glimpse of a sanctuary with a column round which is coiled a serpent. The high-toned, transparent harmony formed by the cool, delicate tints and somewhat cold shadows of this canvas recalls the *Jewish Bride* of the preceding year in the Hermitage. Such pictures, under titles more or less appropriate, seem to have been extremely popular in their day, for old copies painted by Rembrandt's pupils or imitators, notably by Salomon Koninck, are to be found in the Museums of Dresden (No. 1590 in the Catalogue), Berlin (No. 821), Turin (No. 450), in the Liechtenstein Gallery, and in many other collections.

Rembrandt had now more time at his disposal. His marriage, and the proceeds of his portraits ensured him a certain income, and he felt himself free to pursue these methods of study. Many of the types he collected were utilised at this period in compositions inspired, as usual, by the sacred writings. Among such compositions is a small picture in the Hermitage, dated 1634, representing *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*. The Saviour, surrounded by the apostles and holy women, displays

¹ According to an old catalogue, it once bore a signature and the date 1636. Both are now illegible.

His wounds, with a gesture of authority, to which the Saint responds with devout amazement. The scene is well arranged, and the colour is not without brilliance. But the handling is timid, awkward, and wanting in breadth, while the cold colour, blue or greenish in tone, to which the master sometimes had recourse at this period, has none of the richness and distinction that mark many of his contemporary works. Neither is distinction the note of the *Samson threatening his Father-in-law*, in the Berlin Museum, a signed canvas, bearing a date the last figure of which (probably a 6) disappeared when the picture was relined. The subject was long a puzzle to students, and the fashion which formerly obtained of referring the episodes treated by Rembrandt to contemporary history favoured the suggestion that the theme was Duke Adolphus of Guelders, shaking his fist at his imprisoned father-in-law. But, as Mr. Ed. Kolloff was the first to point out, Rembrandt never attempted any incident in modern history,¹ and where it seems difficult to identify the subjects of his pictures, the fault generally lies in an imperfect search among those Scriptures which inspired nearly all his compositions, and which he translated with scrupulous precision. The type of Samson, his costume, and the crisp, bushy hair that falls round his massive head, closely resemble those of M. Édouard de Rothschild's *Standard-Bearer* of the same period, about 1636. Rembrandt, as may be supposed, eagerly seized such an opportunity for the display of gold embroidered stuffs and Oriental weapons. The giant, dressed and armed in Turkish fashion, shakes his clenched fist savagely at his father-in-law, a sharp-featured old man, prudently entrenched behind a heavily clamped door, who looks out through a half-open casement, his hand on the latch, beyond the reach of his terrible son-in-law, but, ready to decamp at a moment's notice. The action is not specially interesting, and the picture, which is in very poor condition, deals with none of those problems of illumination or expression that abound in Rembrandt's works. The touch is hard and dry, the drawing heavy, and even faulty in places, as in Samson's fist. In spite of these defects, however, Napoleon I. greatly admired the picture.

¹ *Rembrandt's Leben und Werke*, in F. von Raumer's *Historisches Taschenbuch*, p. 401 *et seq.*

It was part of the spoil he brought to Paris after his victories in 1806, and by his orders it was placed in his private room at Saint Cloud. There Blücher found it, when he established his head-quarters at the palace in 1815, and thence he restored it to his master, the King of Prussia.

Lord Derby's *Belshazzars Feast*, at Knowsley, probably dates from about the same period. Rembrandt was doubtless fascinated, not only by the decorative splendour proper to such a theme, but by the opportunities it afforded for contrasts of chiaroscuro. The master, as may be supposed, was fully alive to the effect to be won from the display of glittering plate on the table, and the luminous writing on the wall confronting the terror-stricken king. But the coarse handling gives an exaggerated appearance to the contrasts, and the awe of some among the company is expressed by mere grimace. All the defects of this work are intensified in a large canvas dated 1636, in the Schönborn collection at Vienna, *Samson overcome by the Philistines*.¹ The scene is at once horrible and grotesque; the painter seems to have revelled in the repulsive aspects of his subject, and its offensiveness is enhanced by the large scale of the work, the figures being nearly life-size. Betrayed by Delilah, who escapes from the fray, the shorn locks in her hand, Samson has been surprised and overcome by the Philistines. Clutching him by the throat, they fall upon him with spears and halberds; he struggles fiercely, covered with blood, blinded and disfigured by a gaping wound. In spite of the shock produced by such an accumulation of horrors, we are impressed by the elements of wild grandeur and ferocity that characterise the scene. Here the master manifests analogies of temperament, not only with the Dutch writers of his day, but with Shakespeare himself, who, as Dr. Bode has pointed out,² does not shrink from the portrayal of kindred brutalities on the stage. In *King Lear*, to take an analogous example, we witness the blinding of Gloucester in all its atrocity of detail.

¹ From the dimensions of this canvas, an old copy of which is in the Cassel Museum (No. 230 in the Catalogue), it seems probable that it was the *Samson* offered to Huygens in Rembrandt's letters of January 12th and 27th, 1639, as an acknowledgment of the secretary's services in connection with the two last pictures painted for the *Stathouder*.

² *Studien*, p. 429.



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris.

Taste was clearly not one of Rembrandt's strong points, as is abundantly proved by his occasional treatment of mythological subjects. In the *Rape of Ganymede* he made choice of a peculiarly unfortunate theme. It was notoriously one from which classic art, as if recognising its difficulties, had almost wholly refrained down to the period of the decadence, when it had been utilised mainly as a decorative motive.

Setting aside Leochares' conception, described by Pliny, and further known to us by the Vatican copy, representations of the episode were chiefly confined to medals, mirrors, vases or tapestries of the Alexandrine period. The problem was, in fact, a sufficiently complicated one. By dint of great ingenuity the ancients had avoided the pitfalls prepared for them in Pliny's brief description,¹ in adhering to which they had to suggest not only the rapid flight of the eagle, but the care



SKETCH FOR THE JEWISH BRIDE.

1634 (Stockholm Print Room).

with which he refrains from injuring the stolen child, as he bears him through the air. Rembrandt cared little for subtleties of this sort. The actual phenomenon engrossed his whole attention, and, faithful to his principles, his first thought was to reproduce the incident as it might have taken place. Nature has evidently been consulted both for the conception and details of the Dresden picture, which is signed, and dated 1635. The shape, the tawny plumage, and the

¹ *Leochares (fecit) aquilam sententiam quid rapiat Ganymede et cui ferat, parcentemque unguibus, vel per vestem.*

flight of the bird were studied from a real eagle, either alive or stuffed, and a fat little Dutch boy of a vulgar type he happened to pick up, and who figures in several drawings, was his model for the favourite of Jupiter.¹ The child, who has been surprised on top of a tree, lets fall the cherries he was gathering, and his face, by no means beautiful at its best, is distorted by pain as the eagle's claws enter his flesh. We need not dwell on the plump contours revealed by the disordered shirt, nor on the unspeakable fashion in which his terror is indicated. Noting these vulgarities of treatment, we might believe the work to be merely the broad jest of some northern Lucian making merry over Olympus, or a questionable anticipation of the caricatures in modern opera bouffe. But nothing was farther from Rembrandt's thoughts. Vosmaer, who expresses a somewhat exaggerated admiration for the modelling of the child's body, protests against the idea of a parody, and Rembrandt himself sets aside the notion by his preliminary drawing in the Dresden collection, in which he endeavours to characterise his subject, though with no very striking success. His incapacity for the treatment of such themes is glaring. Rubens, who both by temperament and by a long course of training in Italy, was better fitted to cope with them, often failed, but his fiascoes have none of the grotesque assurance that distinguishes those of the Dutch master. The naïve impudence displayed by Rembrandt gives a measure of the gulf that divides Dutch from Italian, or even from Flemish art. Even when he attempted to follow tradition in subjects that make the utmost demands on knowledge and respect, the master only succeeded in proclaiming his irreverent fashion of conception and interpretation.

He seems himself to have felt his limitations. His essays in this *genre* become more and more infrequent, and there is little cause for regret on this score in view of such examples as the *Diana discovering the pregnancy of Callisto*, a company of nymphs bathing in a fantastic landscape, with Actæon in the background. The picture is signed and

¹ A composition by Correggio, known to us from a drawing in the Weimar collection, bears a strong resemblance to Rembrandt's picture, save for the grace and elegance of the Italian master's Ganymede.



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

dated 1635, and is in the Prince of Salm's collection at Anhalt. On the other hand, the so-called *Danäe* in the Hermitage, dated 1636,¹ shows that Rembrandt was now and then happily inspired by a mythological theme. Dr. Bode, however, believes the picture to represent an episode in the Book of Tobit, in which the master was greatly interested at this period. The subject remains obscure; but *Danäe* or *Sara*, the central figure is pre-eminently a study of the nude; and though the type of the face differs in some points from that of *Saskia*, it is almost certain that she was the model. We have already explained the difficulties experienced by Dutch painters in procuring female models, and it must be confessed that those hitherto obtainable by Rembrandt had been far from seductive. It is not surprising, therefore, that with a beautiful young woman close at hand, willing to satisfy his every wish, he should have taken advantage of his opportunities. From the point of view of conjugal propriety, it might, no doubt, be desired that the husband had shown more reticence. But in matters connected with his art, Rembrandt had no such personal scruples, as is sufficiently proved by his allowing *Bol* to see, and even to copy this work.² It is only fair to add that he kept the canvas in his own possession, for we believe this to be the work which figures in the inventory of 1656 as *Diana* or rather *Danäe*, "*Seynde Dianäe*," an entry which confirms the present title of the picture. It had been relegated to a lumber-room in the master's studio. But of course Rembrandt must not be judged too severely on this point. If there were any serious need to defend him, we might quote the example of the great Italian masters of the Renaissance, who availed themselves of the privileges accorded to art in all ages far more freely than he. Does it ever occur to us to inquire where Michelangelo, Giorgione, Titian, and Correggio found the models for their *Venuses*, *Ledas*, and *Antiopes*, the fair women who unblushingly reveal their superb nudity in the landscapes of the masters? Rubens, the refined and courtly cavalier, painted his wife, *Helena Fourment*, in the *Blenheim*

¹ The figure between the two sixes has disappeared. We give the date 1636 as that indicated by the execution.

² In a picture now in the Brunswick Museum, *Tobias brought by Raguel to Sara* (No. 46 in the Catalogue).

Andromeda, now one of the gems of the Berlin Gallery, and in the beautiful picture at Vienna she is shown without even the thin disguise of a mythological title, preparing for the bath, her nudity but slightly veiled by the fur robe drawn round her body.¹

Rembrandt, then, as we see, might have pleaded the examples of his most illustrious predecessors. Loving nature and art as he 'did, he must have rejoiced more than any among them in the opportunities now afforded him of carrying out the studies he had long desired to attempt, from a model so superior to the coarse, mis-shapen types he had hitherto encountered. The young woman, small and dainty of limb, lies on a low bed, raised from the floor by a step. The light falls from the left full on her delicate contours. She appears to see some one advancing towards



PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT.
About 1634 (Hague Museum).

her, whom she welcomes with a radiant look, a smile on her rosy lips. Her right arm is raised and extended; the other rests upon a pillow. A comb set with pearls fastens her golden brown hair, and on her arms are bracelets of gold and pearls. An old hag, with a bunch of keys in her hand, draws back the curtains of the bed, a bed of gilded wood, with massive supports, carved posts, and a figure of Cupid with outspread wings in high relief at the

¹ Like Rembrandt, Rubens kept this study in his studio, and in his will bequeathed it to Helena Fourment herself.

head.¹ By the bed is a table with a cover richly embroidered in gold. The dull crimson of this cover, the greenish brown of the curtains, the greenish blues of the bed, and the touches of gold here and there, make up a subdued harmony that brings the strongly illuminated carnations into admirable relief. The figure is not beyond reproach, and there is a certain want of elegance in the plump contours; but the brilliance of the general effect, the transparent warmth of the shadows, the delicacy of the modelling, the gradations of the chiaroscuro, and the freshness and grace of the youthful body, which seems to quiver with life and joy, all combine to make this work unique among the master's creations.

Saskia's features are more clearly recognisable in two studies of *Susanna at the Bath*, both dated 1637. In the one belonging to Prince Youssouffoff,



PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL.
About 1635 (Cassel Museum).

the face and figure have a certain degree of elegance. The signature, however, we believe to be false, and even the execution would not be above suspicion, but for certain unmistakable traces

¹ The Cupid, the old attendant, and the joyful expression of the young woman, are details that scarcely agree with the text, if the picture represents Sara, and this seems to confirm the traditional title *Danæ*. The bed figures in several other works by Rembrandt, and was, no doubt, among the curiosities collected by him. "A little bed of gilded wood, designed by Verhulst," is mentioned in his inventory.

of the primitive work, which has greatly deteriorated. The other study is in first-rate condition. It belongs to the Hague Museum, and bears the date 1637, together with the name *Rembrant* (without the d), a form of the signature which we here note for the last time. A young woman of Saskia's type and features is represented almost naked. She has thrown off her garments—a purple robe trimmed with gold, and a white chemisette with embroidered sleeves—and is about to step into a bath, above which rise the branches of tall trees, and a palace, the walls of which stand out in relief against a dark sky. A rustling in the foliage startles her as she is about to cast aside the last of her draperies, and turning her rosy face in alarm towards the spectator, she modestly endeavours to hide her nakedness. Behind her, in a tangle of plants and foliage, two heads are slightly indicated, one with gleaming eyes, the other in a turban with a plume. The strong tones of the vegetation, the sky, and the building, emphasise the whiteness of the somewhat thick-set figure. The composition, and the gesture of Susanna, seem to have taken Rembrandt's fancy; we shall find him reproducing the episode, with very slight modifications, in a later work.

Saskia was his model for the chief figure in another Scriptural scene, the *Samson's Marriage Feast* in the Dresden Gallery, dated 1638. The banquet, which took place in a hall hung with splendid tapestries, and lasted seven days, according to the Bible narrative, seems to be drawing to its close. The guests, if we may judge by the licence of their attitudes, have hardly observed the strict sobriety proper to the East. They sit or lie on couches round the table, and divert themselves with small respect for the proprieties. A cavalier in the foreground, more enterprising than the rest, clasps his neighbour closely round the waist; another of the ladies, to whom a gallant offers a cup of wine, proclaims by her gesture that further libations would be perilous. Bedecked like some heathen idol, loaded with necklaces and jewels, a diadem on her head, her hands folded sanctimoniously across her breast, the daughter of the Philistines, who has Saskia's features, sits almost in the centre of the composition, a stolid spectator of the feast.



Samson reclines by her side, but turns away as if no longer greatly interested in her. A garland of leaves rests on his shaggy hair, and his loose robe of green, embroidered with gold and precious stones, is open across his brawny chest. Illustrating his words by a somewhat vulgar gesture, he propounds one of his riddles to a group of musicians in fanciful Turkish dresses behind him. He looks like some herculean acrobat, chatting familiarly with his orchestra. It is difficult to understand what was the master's attraction in this uninteresting episode. Style, by which I mean the harmony between methods of expression and the subject expressed, was clearly out of the question here. But if, setting aside the peculiarities of the composition, we examine its technical qualities, we shall find that the execution has become broader and freer. The play of light is more accurately defined; it is concentrated on the principal group, and the objects in shadow, though less obtrusive, are more distinct, owing to the greater transparency of the low tones. Finally, though there is a want of dignity in the figures, the harmonious splendours of the East are skilfully suggested in their rich costumes, and in the picturesque display of costly stuffs—blues interwoven with silver, and reds embroidered with gold—by which the predominant green tones are happily balanced.

The chief interest of the work lies in the variety of its colour scheme. The tints, though subdued, are gayer than heretofore, and are no longer confined to the monotonous, and somewhat perfunctory russets of the master's early works. In many passages some dominant chord is struck which vibrates throughout an infinity of exquisitely modulated gradations. And whether sustained or vigorously frank in its modulations, this primary tone is never denaturalised. Subtle and flowing as it is, lending itself to every exigency of effect, to every accident of light, and every reflection from neighbouring objects, it never becomes ambiguous. Throughout it preserves its essential qualities.

The *Sportsman with a Bittern* of 1639, also in the Dresden Gallery, is of great interest as showing the results of those studies from nature which deal more especially with colour, and as manifesting

Rembrandt's conscientious earnestness in such investigations. The work is not what we might have expected—a rapid impression, such as those in which many of the master's *confrères* sought relaxation from more serious tasks. It proclaims a definite intention, and attacks a recognised problem. The sportsman, almost wholly in shadow, is



SAMSON THREATENING HIS FATHER-IN-LAW.

About 1635 (Berlin Museum).

partly hidden behind a bird he holds up by its legs. The light falls full on its carefully painted plumage, which under Rembrandt's brush yields a richness of effect truly surprising in view of the restricted colour-scheme. By means of tones closely allied and very simple—grays, pale yellows, yellows rather more intense, russets streaked or flecked with browns, the happy distribution of which he utilises with great skill—the master produces a most original harmony, at once reticent and sonorous.

Fine as the result

unquestionably is, we believe the work to have been primarily an instructive exercise to which Rembrandt looked for ulterior advantages. Later we shall find him profiting by the experience thus acquired, and making use of the scale of colour he had here learnt to handle, as an expressive accompaniment to the more animated and frankly resonant notes contained in the carnations of his portraits, and of the figures in his compositions. When he brought some strongly

illuminated head into brilliant relief against tawny furs or dark velvets, the painter was in fact utilising studies where nature had supplied the raw material his rare genius turned to such intelligent account.

Though the picture in the Dresden Gallery seemed to us convincing evidence of the methods above suggested, we should perhaps have hesitated to pronounce what might possibly have been a mere fortuitous essay, one in a deliberate series of experimental studies. But there is ample proof that Rembrandt made such exercises a frequent practice. Several works of this class figure in his inventory, notably a *Fish*, a *Hare*, a *Bittern* (perhaps the Dresden picture), and three *Vanitas*, which he had re-touched. We have already pointed out that several of the early works painted at Leyden contained studies of still-life. Mr. W. C. Cartwright of London, owns a study of a dead



FRAGMENT OF THE SUSANNA IN THE HAGUE MUSEUM.

1637.

pea-hen, with a peacock hung up by the legs, and the figure of a little girl lightly sketched in the background. The execution, though drier and more summary than that of the Dresden picture, is sufficiently like it to suggest that both were painted at the same period. Finally, the *Carcass of a Bullock* (the *Bœuf Écorché* of the

Louvre), painted in 1655, shows that even at the most advanced period of his development the master still pursued the researches which, by the cultivation of his natural gifts, renewed his powers, and gave him an ever-increasing knowledge of Nature's harmonies. In addition to the artists before and after him who devoted themselves exclusively to such studies, many have sought in them a diversion from their ordinary work, or a vehicle for the display of technical mastery. It was reserved for Rembrandt, resolute to seek extraneous aids from reality alone, to reduce such essays to a method of study which he not only practised himself, but constantly recommended to his pupils. It is one of the functions of the greater artists to systematise exercises, which for others are merely occasional essays, and no master has surpassed Rembrandt in the art of varying his methods, and so combining them on a definite principle as to gain from them the widest experience and the fullest benefit.

We shall find further and most significant proof of the penetration and unwearying enterprise that characterised his genius, in the persistence with which he returned again and again to certain subjects, either remodelling a former conception, or rendering the theme in some aspect totally new. The Bible we know to have been an unfailing source of inspiration to him throughout all his career. But he shows a marked predilection for special episodes. Certain characters of Holy Writ seem to have had a peculiar attraction for him. He follows them from their birth upwards, attaching himself to them, learning the details of their career, living their lives with them; and as his knowledge of them grows, revealing facts concerning them, either newly discovered, or set forth in some original form never attempted by any of his predecessors. We have seen that he had already treated numerous episodes in the history of Samson. But this story, with its stratagems, violence, and opportunities for decorative display, lends itself at best merely to picturesque treatment, and even the character of the hero, and the incidents in which he figures are hardly such as to stir the feelings very deeply. In the Book of Tobit, on the other hand, the master found subjects loftier and more expressive, in which the



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deepest and noblest feelings of humanity are called into play. The tenderness, faith, and patient courage of the old man, whose piety sustains him through the most cruel afflictions, the devotion he inspires in his son, the sacrifice of his own happiness involved in the separation from this beloved child; the youth's journey with his mysterious companion, his adventures by the way, the events connected with his marriage, the growing anxiety of the parents at his prolonged absence, the reproaches with which the wife assails the blind old man; his own regrets; the joy of the return and of the miraculous cure, the amazement of the family when the angel reveals himself, and vanishes from their sight—all these varied and moving incidents Rembrandt treated, some several times over. Pictures, drawings, and etchings form a series of compositions in which all the essential features of the poetic cycle are rendered. Some among the paintings we must allow to be not absolutely above suspicion. The *Tobias restoring his Father's sight*, in the Arenberg Gallery, for instance, duly signed, and dated 1634 or 1636 (the last figure is almost illegible), is a work which does the master small credit, though we do not share Dr. Bode's doubts as to its authenticity.¹ As much may be said for the small panel in the Oldenburg Museum, *The Departure of Tobias with the Angel*. The assertion in the catalogue, that this work is the pendant of the *Tobit's Wife with the Kid* in the Berlin Museum, dated 1647, is somewhat gratuitous. They differ considerably in dimensions—the Oldenburg picture is but $6\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size, the Berlin example measures $7\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$ inches—and though in arrangement and general effect the former recalls other works by the master, its awkward, heavy execution proclaims it more probably a studio picture, for many of Rembrandt's pupils affected these same subjects.

On the other hand, the *Angel Raphael leaving Tobias*, in the Louvre, signed, and dated 1637, is unquestionably one of Rembrandt's masterpieces. The drawing in the Albertina here reproduced, shows how carefully he had studied the composition, the arrangement of which he retains with a few slight modifications in an etching of 1641 (B. 43).

¹ There is a pen drawing of this composition in the Louvre.

The moment chosen by the master is that in which the Angel, his mission accomplished, reveals himself to the family at the threshold of their dwelling, and takes flight. Prostrate in adoration, the aged Tobit kneels, his face bowed humbly towards the ground; his wife, overcome with emotion, drops the staff on which she was leaning. The young couple, bolder than their elders, gaze with respectful curiosity at the mysterious visitant, who, with extended arms and outspread wings, soars triumphantly towards the light. The simplicity and originality of the composition, the ingenious device by which the master, concentrating his group towards the left, yet contrives to draw attention to the Angel by the flow of the lines, and the looks and gestures of the persons below, the flashing radiance of the ascending figure, with its floating hair and draperies, the beautiful adjustment of the pale blue dress over the white tunic, the nervous grace of the iridescent wings, the contrast of their brilliant tints with the sober, yet vigorous tonality of the whole—grays, yellows, greens and russets on an amber ground, forming a harmony in golden brown from a distance—the expression of the faces, each exactly attuned to the age and character of the actor—the austerity of the landscape, and the execution, sober, animated, facile, and insistent only in the most important passages—all these qualities combine to make the work one of the most original and complete of the master's creations.¹

But the crowning beauty of the whole lies in the master's treatment of chiaroscuro, and the extraordinary eloquence with which his effects characterise the subject, and bring out its essential elements of the sublime and the unexpected. Effects of light Rembrandt had already turned to picturesque account on many occasions; but never before had he won them to such significant expression of his thought. Here again that attentive observation of nature he had so successfully

¹ We saw a slightly modified version of the Louvre picture not long ago in Paris, the Angel turned towards the spectator, with arms outstretched to the front. The dog is also differently treated. But though this picture figures as a replica by the master in Smith's Catalogue, we cannot accept it as the work of Rembrandt. In our opinion the heaviness of the handling and of the gradations, the harsh reds of the carnations, and the want of subtlety in the chiaroscuro, betray the hand of a pupil.



Printed by Deagor & Leseur, Paris

practised in his studies of colour bore rich fruit. Chiaroscuro, as we have pointed out, had occupied him very early in his career; his researches in this connection had been steady and extensive. Of this we shall find innumerable proofs in his drawings of this period. He found subjects for experiments in his own home, in his neighbours' houses, in the barns and cattle-sheds he met with in his walks about Amsterdam. He loved such interiors, in which the daylight is concentrated, throwing out vivid rays here and there, whilst all the details round about are veiled in partial shadow. The painter carefully noted all these contrasts and modulations. With such effects he learnt to build up a composition, using them as others before him had used line and colour. In this novel treatment of light, which he had now completely mastered, he found endless resources. Infinite possibilities opened up before him through the medium of that marvellous element, which lends itself to such myriad combinations for the expression of human thought. The forms called up by Rembrandt seem to be transformed as we gaze. They emerge from the gloom and develop; he breathes into them the breath of life; and in a moment, they melt away into darkness once more. The most commonplace objects take on poetry and mystery in this atmosphere. They appear to us at once material and transfigured, with the exact degree of definition or of uncertainty demanded by the master's conception. Borrowed from the world around us, they tell also of that world of imagination treated by the painter, and by him revealed to us.

A little picture of a year earlier, at the Hermitage, the *Workers in the Vineyard*, is as bright and limpid in tone and sentiment, as the *Tobias* of the Louvre is mysterious and complex. Rembrandt's aim seems to have been an epitome of his studies in colour and chiaroscuro, and a formal demonstration of the results to be won by a process of composition he had adapted to his own requirements. Seated at a table, at the other end of which is the scribe who keeps his accounts, the master of the vineyard, calm, and confident of his rights, checks the complaints of two discontented

workers with an authoritative gesture. On the one side three of their comrades discuss their earnings, while others in the background are rolling casks. Here Rembrandt has emphasised the salient features of the scene by a learned subordination of its details, and has further ensured the harmony of the picture by deliberately minimising all the tones save the resonant blue of the sky beyond the windows.

The *Noli me tangere* in the Queen's collection at Buckingham Palace, an upright panel dated 1638, is less happily inspired. The soft golden tonality is not wanting in distinction, nor are the attitude of the Magdalene and her radiant expression unworthy of the master. But the costume of the Saviour, His broad-brimmed straw hat, the white tunic girt about His waist, and the spade in His hand, the pose of the angels seated on the stones of the sepulchre, the landscape, and the fantastic buildings enframing it, verge on the grotesque. Here the painter has given a very imperfect rendering of an episode which must nevertheless have appealed strongly to him. In the touching picture of a later date in the Brunswick Gallery, he has done justice to the inherent poetry and significance of the theme.

Numerous as these works are—and we must include among them several of the scenes from the *Passion* painted for the *Stathouder*—they give but an incomplete idea of Rembrandt's activity at this period. We must further note the drawings and etchings executed during these years. The subjects are, as before, drawn mainly from the Scriptures. The first we are concerned with is a *Return of the Prodigal*, dated 1636 (B. 91), the treatment of which is free and somewhat hasty. As in many of the master's works, the action takes place on the threshold of a house, raised above the level of the ground by two or three steps. The wanderer returns after the many trials he has undergone, and kneels, ragged and dishevelled, at his father's feet. The old man presses him tenderly to his heart; his mother and the servants, hearing the noise, have hurried to the spot. The *Abraham dismissing Hagar* (B. 30), though



later by a year, has neither the breadth of treatment nor the expressive power of the earlier plate. Both types and composition have a certain vulgarity; and the master has made local colour a pretext for the indulgence of his taste for Orientalisms: he represents Ishmael in Turkish costume, and the patriarch in a turban and a long fur-lined robe. Hagar dries her tears with a voluminous handkerchief, while her rival watches her departure with manifest satisfaction from a window above. In the landscape background we recognise the lofty buildings that shut out the horizon in the *Susanna at the Bath* of the Hague Museum, which was painted at the same period. The *Abraham caressing Isaac* (B. 33), probably executed the same year, has more of breadth, if not of distinction. The firm, decisive handling, marks important technical advance, and the master has given great richness and animation to the plate by the flow and close intersection of the lines. But the two figures are utterly without style. The Abraham was discovered in the streets of Amsterdam, and the urchin between his knees bears an unfortunate likeness to the *Ganymede* already described. The figures in an etching of 1638, *Adam and Eve in Paradise* (B. 28), are as vulgar, and more repulsively ugly than these. It is hard to say which is the more unattractive of the well-matched pair, and the grotesque dragon who tempts them is a fitting complement to the scene. The execution of this plate however is remarkably free and delicate. Another plate dated 1638, *Joseph relating his Dreams* (B. 37), was preceded by a *grisaille* of the same subject, belonging to Mr. Six, painted probably some years earlier. It is carried out in yellow tones, the details put in lightly upon a thin glaze of colour, heightened here and there by semi-transparent touches. Beauty is scarcely the strong point of the persons either in the print or in the sketch; but their various expressions are very characteristic of the subject, notably those of the young speaker and the old man,¹ who looks at him earnestly as if already

¹ The type of the old man is that of one of the *Philosophers* and of several etchings of this period.

presaging the future greatness of his son. The same expressive qualities are combined with very happy arrangement in a *Presentation in the Temple* (B. 49), which was no doubt begun the year following. Judging by the finished portions, it seems probable that the artist intended to treat this plate with a good deal of elaboration. But whether from some defect in the copper, or some accident in the

biting, all the impressions are monotonously gray, and the work was never completed.



A YOUNG MAN MUSING.

1637 (B. 268).

Among the engraved portraits of this period, the first belongs to the year 1636, and represents the *Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel* (B. 269), a half-length figure, almost full-face, wearing a broad-brimmed hat. As we have already said, he was a man distinguished for his intelligence and uprightness, and one of the most eminent members of the Jewish colony in Amsterdam. Born in

1604, he was nearly of the same age as Rembrandt, and the painter no doubt took pleasure in his society, and often consulted him as to readings of the Scripture texts. A friendship had grown up between them, and the intimacy thus established was a lasting one, for in 1654 Menasseh commissioned Rembrandt to illustrate one of his books. The artist has admirably expressed the frank and loyal character of his sitter by the simplicity of his portrait. The head is drawn in outline, and very slightly

shaded. The *Old Man with a Square Beard and a velvet cap* (B. 313) of the following year is more elaborately treated, as



THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN.

1639 (B. 99).

befitted the type, of which a sagacious prudence is the dominant characteristic. The drawing is somewhat round and soft, very

different to that of another portrait of the same year, *A Young Man seated and musing* (B. 268). The firmness and exquisite sobriety of the handling in this plate entitle it to rank among Rembrandt's masterpieces. It is impossible to forget the depth of expression in the sitter's melancholy face, his mournful eyes and suffering look, his air of weakness and ill-health. The cap on his head and the scarf about his neck seem to proclaim him one of Rembrandt's intimates. Taking into account the extreme simplicity of the execution, it seems to us that expressive power could hardly go further. A portrait of Uytenbogaerd, dated 1639, and commonly known as the *The Gold-weigher* (B. 281), is a more highly finished work. Rembrandt, as we know, had certain dealings at this time with Uytenbogaerd, the Treasurer of the States of Holland, in connection with payments for the pictures ordered by Prince Frederick Henry. He represents the Treasurer in a velvet cap and fur-trimmed dress seated at a table, his ledger before him, and a pair of scales ready to test the weight of the bullion in the money bags by his side. He holds his pen in his right hand, and with his left gives one of the bags to a kneeling boy, who is busy packing the coin into little barrels ranged on the ground near a great strong-box clamped with iron. A man and woman in the background bring more bags; an arched picture, representing the incident of the *Brazen Serpent*, hangs on the wall. In the first state of this print, Uytenbogaerd's head is indicated by a few slight strokes of the needle; in the second, the refined and very individual face is treated with the same sobriety of execution we have admired in several preceding portraits, while in other portions of the plate, as for instance the tablecloth and the kneeling boy, we recognise the hand of a pupil, perhaps Ferdinand Bol. But the general effect, and the skilful distribution of the light, show that the assistance of another was kept within narrow limits.

The large plate of the *Death of the Virgin* (B. 99), also a work

of 1639, is greatly superior to this, not only by reason of its more important dimensions, but in its beauty of arrangement and originality of treatment. It is, in fact, one of the most masterly of Rembrandt's creations.¹ Having made up his mind not to carry his work throughout the whole plate, he frankly proclaims his resolution, and the decision he shows in adhering to it proves the completeness of his initial conception. Before touching the copper he made a number of preliminary studies, notably one of the doctor holding the dying woman's hand, whose figure, exactly reproduced, but reversed, is to be found in another of the master's plates (B. 155). In the Berlin Print Room there is a study for one of the kneeling women, and the bed, with its carved posts and canopy, is that of the *Danæ* in the Hermitage, the only modification being the omission of the carved Cupid at the head. Every emotion brought into play by the death of one long loved and venerated is mirrored here. Some among the persons who gather round the Virgin's bed try to relieve her sufferings, as, for instance, the old man who supports her head with tender respect, and holds some restorative perfume to her nostrils; others kneel in prayer; others gaze lovingly at her, or give way to uncontrollable grief. But in spite of the multiplicity of figures, the pathetic interest and the emotional aspect of the scene predominate throughout. The details, though peculiarly rich and varied, all contribute to the general effect, and, far from impairing the unity of the conception, serve to intensify it. It would be hard to say too much in praise of the bold contrasts which give richness and colour to this plate by the simplest means. Reserving all the light for the centre of the composition, Rembrandt was content to render the persons whose faces and

¹ "Every lover of Art comes in time to have private predilections which he cannot always readily account for and explain. Thus, of all the plates of Rembrandt, the 'Death of the Virgin' is the one that fascinates and moves me most." Thus interestingly writes Mr. Hamerton, in his 'Etching and Etchers.' He is assuming, of course, that the impression you look at is really a fine one.—F. W.

attitudes he so vigorously characterises, by outlines no less expressive than concise. The eloquent brevity of such treatment will give some idea of his consummate draughtsmanship. In no creation has he proclaimed his intentions more emphatically, or given nobler expression to the emotions aroused in him by the poetry of a beautiful theme.



THE GRANDMOTHER.

Pen drawing (Stockholm Print Room).



PEN DRAWING HEIGHTENED WITH SEPIA.
(Duke of Devonshire's Collection.)

CHAPTER XII.

REMBRANDT'S GROWING FAME—HIS INFLUENCE ON HIS CONTEMPORARIES—HIS FIRST PUPILS AT AMSTERDAM: FERDINAND BOL, GOVERT FLINCK, GERBRANDT VAN DEN EECKHOUT, JAN VICTORS, PHILIPS DE KONINCK, ETC.—HIS REPUTED AVARICE—HIS TASTES AS A COLLECTOR—PURCHASE OF A HOUSE IN THE BREESTRAAT—REMBRANDT'S FRIENDS AND DOMESTIC HABITS—ETCHINGS OF SASKIA—THE DEATH OF REMBRANDT'S MOTHER.



BUST OF A MAN WITH CURLING HAIR,
AND HIS UNDER-LIP THRUST OUT.
About 1635 (B. 305).

REMBRANDT'S talents, and the favour he enjoyed at Amsterdam, had now made him widely known. His etchings, which had been well received from the first, spread his fame not only throughout his own country but in foreign lands, and many pupils came to seek instruction from him. We do not think, however, that he received any into his studio in the very early days of his residence. He was then less ex-

tensively known. Besides which, the ages of those who are found to have been his first pupils sufficiently prove that they cannot have become Rembrandt's apprentices till some few years after his arrival. When he had rather more time at his disposal, he found it impossible to refuse all of the many applicants for admission. He was at once the most fashionable portraitist and the most con-

spicuous historical painter of the day. Various circumstances, as we shall see, had combined with his superiority over his rivals to secure his pre-eminence.

We have already spoken of the fascination which drew so many Dutch painters to Italy. On their return these emigrants introduced the taste for Biblical and mythological subjects, together with that interest in problems of chiaroscuro they had acquired in the cosmopolitan colony of Caravaggio's disciples. We need but quote the names of Ribera at Naples, Valentin and Claude Lorraine in France, Elsheimer in Germany, and Honthorst in Holland, to prove that painters of all countries were busying themselves with researches bearing on the properties and effects of light. The band of *Italianisers* who had preceded Rembrandt was gradually dwindling and declining. The most famous of them—his master, Lastman—had died at the beginning of February, 1633, shortly after Rembrandt's arrival at Amsterdam. Others, such as the Pynases, Leonard Bramer, Moses Uytenbroeck, and Dirck Bleker, found themselves eclipsed by their young rival; several among them became his imitators. Rembrandt, though faithful to many of the principles of his national art, had extended its domain. To the charm of an incomparable technique he added the splendour of a rich imagination; but more than this, his interpretation of the Scriptures appealed to the religious sentiment of his contemporaries, and he drew unexpected eloquence from apparently exhausted themes. He had thus a strong title to public favour, and his influence extended far beyond Amsterdam, making itself felt in cities which, by virtue of their distance or of their own artistic preoccupations might have been supposed to lie beyond its reach. Dordrecht, which reckoned several masters of distinction among its painters, sent him a number of pupils in succession. Artists already established in the city, such as Benjamin Cuyp, imitated him in their choice of subjects; and Albert Cuyp, Benjamin's famous nephew, soon adopted Rembrandt's methods in the arrangement and illumination of his portraits. Another of the Dordrecht artists, Paulus Lesire, who entered the guild of the city in 1631, made a more complete surrender of independence. In several of his por-

traits,¹ his sitter masquerades in the martial trappings so dear to Rembrandt, and but for their feeble execution, they might easily be mistaken for works of his exemplar. In other towns—at Haarlem, Delft, and even at Deventer, among the Terborchs—we shall find similar evidence of the master's prestige, a prestige so great that, in the words of Houbraken, "none but imitators of his manner had any chance of popularity."

Such being the case, pupils flocked to Rembrandt from all quarters of Holland, and even from neighbouring countries, as soon as he announced his willingness to receive them. But among the scholars imputed to him there are some whose claim to the title we are inclined to doubt. We have already given reasons for considering Willem de Poorter a disciple, rather than a pupil of Rembrandt. Neither do we believe Jacob de Wet to have been his scholar. A similarity of names has caused a good deal of confusion between the various De Wets, and the question of their identity is still obscure; but in our opinion there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Van der Willigen's statements as to Jacob.² We have already mentioned this artist, whose works show a strong affinity to Rembrandt, in spite of a certain roughness of style and execution. We have also pointed out the differences between the two *Resurrections of Lazarus* signed De Wet (in the Hermitage and the Darmstadt Museum) and the large plate of 1633 ascribed to Rembrandt. The fact that this same date appears on the second of the two pictures seems to us conclusive evidence against De Wet's supposed apprenticeship to Rembrandt. The similarities to Rembrandt which we shall find in various other works by De Wet, such, for instance, as the *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* belonging to M. Semenoff, and the *Christ on Calvary* in the Orloff-Davidoff collection, are no less conspicuous in the works of many contemporary painters.

As to Jacob Adriaensz Backer, if he, as is commonly supposed, ever studied under Rembrandt, his noviciate must have been of the

¹ Notably one in the Haussmann collection at Hanover, and another in the Semenoff collection at St. Petersburg.

² *Les Artistes de Haarlem*, p. 324.

briefest. Born at Harlingen in 1608 or 1609, he was nearly of the same age as his reputed master, and when he arrived at Amsterdam after his apprenticeship to Lambert Jacobsz at Leeuwarden, Houbraken tells us it was with the intention of practising independently. He was in fact already an accomplished artist. A first-rate draughtsman, he excelled in life studies in black and white chalk, more particularly in those from female models, and as a painter, he was famed for the extraordinary rapidity of his execution. Houbraken, who repeatedly takes occasion to praise his amiability and sweetness of disposition, mentions a female portrait which he completed in a day. Some of his more important works, such as the *Portrait of Uytenbogaerd* of 1638, in the Council Chamber of the Remonstrants at Amsterdam, the *Regents of the Municipal Orphanage* in that city, and the beautiful *Dutch Family* belonging to Mr. H. Krafft, give a very favourable impression of the refinement, sincerity, pleasant colour, and admirable arrangement that distinguish his portraits, some of which are equal to any painted by De Keyser and Rembrandt at this period. Backer was on excellent terms with both artists, and De Keyser painted a portrait of him, which survives only in a print by Th. Matham.

Born at Dordrecht in June, 1616, Ferdinand Bol was brought as a child to Amsterdam. He must have entered Rembrandt's studio at an early age, probably when he was about sixteen. Both as painter and engraver he was one of the master's first and best pupils. He is supposed to have remained some eight or nine years with him. But he had certainly left him before 1642, for there is a *Portrait of an old Lady* by him in the Berlin Museum bearing this date, which also appears on three of his etchings. His early works are very unequal. One, a *Salome dancing before Herod*, is positively grotesque in its awkwardness. But by 1644 Bol's powers were fully developed. A *Flight into Egypt* of this year in the Dresden Gallery is a well composed picture, slightly monotonous in its brown tonality, but marked by great sweetness and charm of expression. In the *Angels at the Tomb of Jesus* in the Copenhagen Museum, a very important work of the same year, with life-size figures, the scene, which takes place in a

cave, is Rembrandtesque in its grandeur of conception and knowledge of chiaroscuro. Several of the figures are indeed borrowed from Rembrandt, among them the woman with arms outstretched, who gazes wonderingly at the Saviour, and another, who kneels on the ground in an attitude identical with that of Tobit in the *Angel Raphael* of the Louvre. The figure of Sara in the *Tobias and his Bride* of the Brunswick Museum is almost an exact reproduction of the *Dante* in the Hermitage, and we shall find Bol levying contributions on his master for various other pictures and engravings. His skill as an etcher no doubt enabled him to give valuable help to Rembrandt towards the close of his apprenticeship, for, as Bartsch remarks, "his management of the point is so strikingly akin to that of Rembrandt himself, that we should have some difficulty in distinguishing between the works of the two, if we



JOSEPH TELLING HIS DREAMS.

1638 (B. 37).

relied solely on the technique for guidance." Of the fifteen plates catalogued by Bartsch, three are dated 1642, and three others 1645, 1649, and 1651 respectively. Bol's indebtedness to Rembrandt is no less apparent in these than in his pictures. In plates such as the *Aged Philosopher*, the *Old Man with a curling Beard*, the *Man in a Cap*, dated 1642 (B. 6, 9 and 13), and the *Portrait of an Officer*, in a plumed cap and steel gorget, of 1645 (B. 11), types, arrangement and execution are closely allied to those of

the master. The large plate of *Abraham's Sacrifice* (B. 1), the *Gideon's Sacrifice* (B. 2), and the *Family* (B. 4), a plate of 1649, seem to be copies, more or less free, of compositions by Rembrandt.¹ The rich colour and the distribution of light in many of Bol's early portraits are so closely allied to like features in his master's works that it is not unusual, even in the best collections, to find pictures by Bol on which Rembrandt's signature has been substituted for that of his pupil. Such are the two charming portraits in the Munich Pinacothek, probably Govert Flinck and his wife (Nos. 338 and 339). They were formerly catalogued as by Rembrandt, and bear a forged signature and the date 1642. On two other portraits, belonging to Lord Ashburton, the date 1641 has been left, and the B of the original signature is incorporated with the name Rembrandt, which now figures on each.² We may mention in conclusion two portraits at Grosvenor House ascribed to Rembrandt, and dated 1643, in which both Dr. Bredius and I fancied we could detect the hand of Bol. As time went on the pupil gradually emancipated himself from the master's influence, and showed himself the possessor of a pleasing original talent in many pictures lighter in tone and better suited to popular taste, which were much admired. Bol was honoured by commissions from princes, municipalities, and corporations; he was employed on the decorations of the Town Hall of Amsterdam, and in the Museum and the Burgomasters' Gallery there are portraits by him of the Regents of various charitable institutions, the most notable of which is the group of the seven Regents of the Huiszittenhuis, painted in 1657. The artist became one of the managers of this establishment himself, and retained the office, which was then much in request, until his death. In his later portraits there is a certain tameness in the drawing, and the heads, somewhat round and heavy in modelling, have little of the individuality which distinguishes those of Rembrandt's portraits. Yet Bol was high in popular favour when Rembrandt was forsaken and neglected.

¹ The latter reproduces the grouping of the *Carpenter's Family* in the Louvre, reversing it, however.

² They were Nos. 69 and 76 in the Winter Exhibition of 1890.

Poets sang his praises; he had amassed a modest fortune at his death in July, 1680, and Houbraken, commenting on his happy and well-spent life, remarked that he had been "the favourite alike of nature and of fortune."

Govert Flinck, who was nearly of the same age as Bol, must certainly have been his fellow-pupil in Rembrandt's studio. Flinck's apprenticeship was, however, a very brief one. He was born at Cleves, January 25, 1615; but his family had resolutely opposed his passionate desire to become an artist. It happened, however, that a Mennonite preacher visited Cleves, by whose eloquence Flinck's parents were deeply moved. They were greatly astonished to learn that a man of such exemplary character and high attainments was no other than the famous painter, Lambert Jacobsz, of Leeuwarden. They forthwith decided to entrust him with the education of their son, who made rapid progress under his teaching. Jacob Backer, a fellow-pupil in Jacobsz's studio, having left Leeuwarden to settle at Amsterdam, Flinck followed him, and placed himself under Rembrandt, with whom he remained a year. It was probably at his master's recommendation that he lodged with Rembrandt's friend and cousin, Hendrick van Uylenborch, the art dealer, of whose house he was an inmate in 1637. His pupilage must have been at an end as early as 1636, for in that year he signed a portrait of a young girl, now in the Brunswick Museum. This portrait, together with one of a young officer (1637) in the Hermitage, and another in the Louvre, of a little girl masquerading as a shepherdess (1641), after the fashion of the day, have a freshness and brilliance of colour, and a delicacy in the shadows, which recall portraits painted by Rembrandt about 1633-34. Several of Flinck's pictures were based on the master's creations. His *Angel appearing to the Shepherds*, in the Louvre, was unquestionably inspired by Rembrandt's plate (B. 44), and his *Jacob's Blessing*, in the Ryksmuseum, was as evidently founded on a drawing by the master in the Stockholm collection. At a later period Flinck was fascinated by the examples of Rubens and Vandyck he probably saw at Antwerp. He abandoned his exercises in the

treatment of light, and gradually adopted a bright, limpid, cheerful manner, in strong contrast with that of his master. His sober handling was better suited to the general taste, and his vogue increased as Rembrandt's popularity declined. His works were even more admired than those of Bol, and he became the fashionable painter of the day. Vondel, whose portrait Flinck painted, applauds him in several of his poems, and other writers compare him with Rembrandt, only to proclaim his superiority to the master. Various important works for the Town Hall of Amsterdam and the House in the Wood (*Huis ten Bosch*), near the Hague, were entrusted to him; he divided the patronage of the civic guards with Van der Helst, and received many commissions from the Elector of Brandenburg. His marriage with the daughter of the Director of the East India Company at Rotterdam greatly advanced his fortunes, and he was respected as a man of means by his fellow-citizens. He built himself a fine studio, with a gallery lighted from above, in which he arranged his collection of statues, casts, pictures and drawings. Connoisseurs and distinguished men met at his house to discuss art questions, and when Prince Maurice came to Amsterdam, he was a frequent visitor in Flinck's studio. The two large pictures in the Ryksmuseum: *Captain Bas with his Company* (1645), and the *Banquet in Honour of the Peace of Westphalia* (1648), are typical examples of his powers. The proportions of the figures are not always correct, but the grouping is very happy, the execution is broad and supple, and the gay variety of the colours makes a pleasant harmony, more especially in the earlier work, in which there are echoes here and there of the handling of Van Dyck and of the intonations of Velazquez.

Unlike Bol and Flinck, who soon abandoned Rembrandt's manner, a somewhat younger pupil, Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout—born at Amsterdam, August 19, 1620—remained faithful to the instruction he had shared with them. He was the son of a goldsmith, with whom Rembrandt may have had dealings and had received some education—sufficient at least to enable him to write verses. Two of his effusions have been preserved, one written under a drawing of his own, the

other under one by Jan van de Cappelle, in a *Liber Amicorum*, or family album, a fashionable possession of that period. These verses, however, show no great poetic faculty, and abound in the laborious subtleties and conceits approved by the taste of the day. His artistic education was completed by 1641; a picture signed by him and bearing that date was shown to me in London. It is remarkable for its soft, golden tonality, and represents *Jacob Blessing his Children*. Van den Eeckhout painted several good portraits, among others that of a *Savant* in the Städel Institute; but his best works are on a small scale. Though he had a certain measure of individuality, he shows himself a docile imitator of Rembrandt in choice of subject, as in composition, and treatment of chiaroscuro. His *Woman taken in Adultery*, in the Ryksmuseum, is a manifest *pasticcio* on Rembrandt's picture of 1644, in the National Gallery. But when he makes choice of historical subjects, and treats them on a large scale, as in his *Darius and his Family*, in the Hermitage (1662), or the *Sophonisba*, at Brunswick (1664), his execution becomes tame, and on the pretext of local colour, he loads his figures with the most fantastic accoutrements. It was no doubt his inability to work satisfactorily in large dimensions which prevented Eeckhout from undertaking those portrait groups of the civic guards which gave employment to most of his fellow-students. On the other hand, he showed some taste for decorative art; two series of ornamental subjects are extant, which he made from designs by himself, J. Lutma, and the two Van Vianens, for the use of goldsmiths, sculptors, and painters. Throughout his life he retained a tender affection for his master, whom he did not long survive, for he was buried at Amsterdam, September 29, 1674. We learn from Houbraken that he was also greatly attached to the landscape painter, R. Roghman, one of Rembrandt's most faithful friends.

Several painters, very inferior to those we have enumerated, must be added to the list of Rembrandt's pupils at this period. Among these was Jan Victors, born at Amsterdam in 1620. He must have quitted the master's studio by 1640, for his *Continence of Scipio* at the

Hermitage, and his *Young Girl at a Window* in the Louvre, both bear that date. In the latter, as in some of his portraits, notably that of the Burgomaster J. Appelman (1661) in the Haarlem Museum, and in the *Pork-butcher* (1648), a study in the Ryksmuseum, Victors shows that the master's teaching had not been entirely lost on him. But in most of his large compositions, as, for instance, the *Joseph interpreting the Dreams* (1648), the *Dentist* (1654) in the Ryksmuseum, and the three pictures in the Brunswick Museum: *Esther and Haman* (1642), *David and Solomon* (1653) and *Samson captured by the Philistines*, there is little to redeem the vulgarity of his types and arrangement, his insipidity of expression, and the peculiarly unpleasant effect of his dingy yellow tones. Though Victors was but a mediocre artist, we learn from a document lately discovered among the archives that he shone in good works; he accepted the post of nurse or attendant to the sick on board a ship, and died in India, after one of his voyages.

To Dr. Bredius we owe our knowledge of another pupil of Rembrandt's, hitherto ignored. In March, 1637, on the occasion of the sale of the painter, Pieter Bassée at Amsterdam, Rembrandt, as was not unfrequently his custom, desired "his pupil,"¹ one Leendert Cornelisz van Beyeren, to attend. The latter bought a book of drawings and prints by Lucas van Leyden for the respectable sum of 637 florins.¹ Born at Amsterdam, probably in 1620, Leendert Cornelisz was the son of a rich timber merchant of the town, whose second wife was the widow of Jan Pynas the painter. He had frequented Rembrandt's studio, and his inventory, and also that of his father, mention several copies by him after the master, studies of heads, one of them representing a soldier. His early death, in 1649, accounts for the extreme rarity of his works. Dr. Bredius is of opinion that the only picture we may ascribe to him with any show of probability is an *Ecce Homo* in the Buda-Pesth Museum. The execution of this work, which is painted in the Rembrandtesque manner, is quite unlike that of any known pupil of the master; and the inventory of Leendert's effects, dated October

¹ *Oud-Holland*, v. p. 217.

10, 1649, mentions a picture by him, the subject of which was an *Ecce Homo*.

Salomon Koninck has been erroneously included among Rembrandt's scholars. Born in 1609, he was but little younger than the master. He had received a very similar training, and ended by falling completely under Rembrandt's influence. David Colyns, Frans Venant, Lastman's brother-in-law, and Claes Moeyaert, one of the most prominent artists of the day, were successively his masters. Though he may be considered a disciple of Moeyaert, his affinities to Rembrandt are still more strongly marked, and his *Praying Hermits* and *Contemplative Philosophers* are candid *pasticci* on those of his model. He even went beyond mere imitation, and we have already mentioned the numerous copies by him of the *Rabbi* of 1635, at Chatsworth. The mistake as to Koninck's relations with Rembrandt arose, no doubt, from the fact that Philips Koninck, probably his cousin, was Rembrandt's pupil at the time we are dealing with. Philips was born at Amsterdam in 1619, and buried there October 4, 1688. He is best known as a painter of landscape, but Gerard Hoet mentions a *Girl at a Window* by him, and another of his works, a *Sleeping Venus*, was praised in some verses by Vondel, with whom the artist seems to have been on terms of friendship all his life, for he drew and painted many portraits of the poet. Of Philips Koninck's landscapes we shall have more to say when we speak of his master's.

Hitherto, neither biographers nor archives have yielded any additions to the restricted list of Rembrandt's pupils at this period. Even allowing that some may have escaped notice, we cannot but think that Sandrart slightly exaggerated their numbers in the passage we have quoted. Though Rembrandt in common with his brother artists, availed himself of his pupil's collaboration to a certain extent, he never systematically relied upon it. We have noticed his reluctance to sign works not entirely by his own hand, and the care with which he pointed out his own share in a composition. Houbraken, who quotes Sandrart's text in this connection, adds some particulars as to the methods adopted in Rembrandt's studio: "Each pupil worked in

a cell, divided from his neighbour by partitions of canvas, or even of paper, so that he might be entirely undisturbed and independent of others, in his studies from nature." A drawing by Rembrandt, bequeathed to the Louvre by M. His de la Salle (No. 202), of which we give a reproduction, represents the interior of the *atelier*, and confirms Houbraken's description. In the foreground a painter, probably one of the pupils, is seated before an easel, palette in hand, engaged on the portrait of a lady near him. Under a window to the left is a man in a large hat, drawing or engraving, and in the background behind, an assistant grinding colours on a small table. Beyond him are compartments like the stalls in a stable, opening upon a corridor; a large parasol, some draperies, a death's head, and various objects arranged as a trophy adorn the walls.

Rembrandt, who well knew the importance of individual work, was doubtless anxious to secure it for his pupils, by this subdivision. He was also quite capable of maintaining order and discipline among the young men, when they showed signs of abusing the liberty allowed them. A story told by Houbraken sufficiently proves this. One summer day, the master, coming unexpectedly into the studio, heard one of his pupils, who was shut into his cell with a female model, laughingly exclaim: "Here we are, for all the world like Adam and Eve in Paradise!"—"And like them you shall be driven out!" cried Rembrandt, and instantly ordering the door to be opened, he chased them down the staircase and into the street, barely allowing them time to snatch up a few of their garments.

We have seen that the master, in addition to his studies from the human body, turned everything around him to account for his own instruction. The animals, objects of still-life, and stuffs he used were also copied by his pupils. Several of their studies, some re-touched by himself, are enumerated in his inventory. He was careful to vary such work as much as possible, and to this end, he made his house a perfect museum of curiosities, and seemed never weary of adding new acquisitions to his stores, costly materials, stuffed animals, richly



Photo. Dr. J. A. Leach, P. 10.

ornamented weapons, plasters, casts from nature or the antique, pictures and engravings by various masters. He transacted business with all the principal art-dealers, and was a frequent attendant at sales. So early as 1635, he bought a number of drawings, chiefly by Adriaen Brauwer, at the Van Sommeren sale, on February 22. In 1637 his name is often to be met with in the registers of sales, held by order of the courts of justice. He bought pictures, prints, shells, horns, &c., In an account book which belonged to the Advocate Trojanus de Magistris, one of the best-known amateurs of the day, a sum of 424 florins is entered under the date October 8, 1637, as received from Rembrandt for a picture of *Hero and Leander* by Rubens, which had been deposited with Trojanus. When Rembrandt wished to make a purchase himself, he very often commissioned one of his pupils to bid for him, as we know he did in the case of Pieter Bassée's sale. His interests were certainly safer in their hands than his own. A very significant piece of information on this point is furnished by the Florentine writer, Baldinucci,² to whom we owe some curious details as to Rembrandt's character and habits, details we may safely accept in the main, as he derived them from the master's Danish pupil, Bernard Keilh, who lived with him for eight years. "When Rembrandt was present at a sale," he tells us, "it was his habit, especially when pictures or drawings by great masters were put up, to make an enormous advance on the first bid, which generally silenced all competitors. To those who expressed their surprise at such a proceeding, he replied that by this means he hoped to raise the status of his profession." Baldinucci adds, that this man, who has too long been represented as a miser, "willingly lent all his possessions to artists who required them for their works."

Houbraken was the first to accuse Rembrandt of avarice, thus opening up a new field of calumny to his successors. The instance he cites in support of his charge is anything but conclusive, even

¹ *Oud-Holland*, v. p. 214.

² Filippo Baldinucci: *Cominciamento e progresso dell' arte dell' intagliare in rame*. Florence. 1686.

if its authenticity be admitted. He relates that some of Rembrandt's pupils, having detected his weakness, occasionally amused themselves by painting a small coin on the floor, which the master would endeavour to pick up. We know that Rembrandt's temper, though kindly, was not very long-suffering, and he was not the person to tolerate the repetition of such an impertinence. Granting that he may have been victimised on one occasion, it is absurd to lay stress on such a very natural impulse, one to which his habitual absence of mind made him especially liable, and which may be readily accounted for on other grounds than that of avarice. Few artists, indeed, have shown such a lack of worldly wisdom in the conduct of their affairs, and he was destined to cruelly expiate his want of method at the close of his career. He squandered his money in the most prodigal fashion: that which Saskia brought him, no less than his own earnings, and the legacies that fell to him from time to time. Far from watching keenly over his own interests, he was always too ready to neglect them, and in the administration of family affairs he was invariably guided by his natural generosity, and by a kindliness which as Baldinucci assures us "often led him into extravagances." As his money came in, it was immediately spent on acquisitions of all sorts: he also drew largely on his credit: and in the matter of ornaments for his beloved Saskia, nothing was too magnificent. The pearls, precious stones, rich necklaces, clasps, and bracelets of every kind she wears in her portraits, and in the pictures for which she sat, were not, as Vosmaer supposes, gems of Rembrandt's imagination, created by a stroke of the brush. From these portraits and pictures we might make an inventory of the young wife's jewel-case. We shall give the actual list further on. Urged alike by his love for Saskia and his devotion to his art, Rembrandt found it impossible to resist the temptation of these purchases. In addition to the silver basins, ewers, and cups he introduces in many of his compositions, note the jewels that sparkle in the hair and ears, on the arms, neck and breast of the *Artemisia* in the Prado and of *Samson's Bride* at Dresden, as

also those which are the sole adornment of the *Danæ* in the Hermitage.

Certain of Saskia's relatives, prompted either by jealousy, or by genuine disapproval of the lavish expenditure and unconventional proceedings of the young couple, began to criticise the household with some severity. Divisions had sprung up in the family in connection with the distribution of old Rombertus' estate. A series of law-suits engaged in by the disputants had caused mutual estrangements. Rembrandt had espoused the cause of the Gerard van Loos, who had his entire confidence. On the eve of his marriage he had, in fact, placed all his interests in Friesland in Gerard's hands. By a deed drawn up at Rotterdam, on July 22, 1634, Gerard was empowered to deal with all sums due to the young couple and to "sign all contracts and receipts for them."¹ The result of the litigation above mentioned was a judgment given by the court of Friesland in the Van Loos' favour, and their opponents had no doubt vented their chagrin in somewhat free strictures on Rembrandt and his wife, declaring that Saskia had "squandered her patrimony in jewels and display." Greatly incensed by attacks which he felt to be not wholly groundless, Rembrandt brought an action against the Albert van Loos, and supported by his brother-in-law, Ulric van Uylenborch, he demanded damages for "a calumny in no respect true," declaring that he and his wife were on the contrary "richly and even superabundantly (*ex superabundanti*) provided with means," and that they had, therefore, just claims to compensation. The court, however, adjudged his grievance insufficient, and non-suited him by a decree of July 16, 1638.²

In spite of his assertion of solvency, Rembrandt had already been in difficulties, and even before 1637 he had been obliged to raise money. His correspondence with Huygens furnishes evidence of his embarrassments. Writing to the Prince's secretary, on January 27, 1639, to announce the completion of the two pictures, the *Entombment* and the *Resurrection*, he begs for immediate payment, "as the money would be

¹ *Oud-Holland*, viii. p. 208.

² Scheltema: *Discours sur Rembrandt*; notes to the French edition, p. 61.

very acceptable just now." He further interviewed the Treasurer, Uytenbogaerd, who told him that payment might be made at his office.¹ On the thirteenth of February following, Rembrandt, having agreed

to the proposed price of 600 florins each for his pictures, *plus* 44 florins for frames and case, returned to the charge, asking that payment might be made "as quickly as possible at Amsterdam." As however there was a further delay of some days, he repeated his request more urgently than before, begging that "the order might be made out immediately." His importunity was needless, for in the interval (on February 17) Huygens had instructed the Treasurer-General Volbergen to discharge the Prince's debt.

We learn from other sources the cause of Rembrandt's impatience, and his solicitations for payment. A few days before he had bought a house. On his arrival at Amsterdam he had, according to Houbraken, taken up his quarters in a warehouse on the Bloemgracht. His letters to Huygens mention various subsequent domiciles. In February, 1636,



REMBRANDT'S HOUSE IN THE BREESTRAAT.

(In its present state.)

he was living in the Nieuwe Doel Straet; three years later he removed to a house on a new quay, at the end of the town, on the Binnen

¹ It was probably one of these visits to Uytenbogaerd which suggested to Rembrandt the idea and the motive of his *Gold-weigher*, the print we described in the last chapter. It was also in acknowledgment of Huygens' good offices in this matter that he offered the large picture the Secretary had hesitated to accept. The date and dimensions (10 feet by 8) of this picture seem to indicate, as we have already remarked, that the *Samson* in the Schönborn collection was the work in question.

Amstel. It was known as the *Sugar Refinery* (*l'huys is genaemt die Suykerbackery*). Such changes were little to the taste of a recluse like Rembrandt; he felt the need of a home in which he could set up his studio, install his pupils, and arrange his collections. On January 5, 1639, he bought a house belonging to the heirs of P. Beltens in the Joden-Breestraat (a continuation of the Saint Anthonis Bree-straat), the second beyond the bridge. This house, which was in



VIEW OF THE BINNEN AMSTEL.

(The *Suykerbackery* was to the left, on the quay with trees.)

(Facsimile of a contemporary engraving.)

the very heart of the Jewish quarter, adjoined that of the Jew, Salvador Rodrigues, on the east, and on the west, that of Rembrandt's brother-artist, Nicolaes Elias. The price was 13,000 florins, a fourth of which was to be paid a year after possession, and the remainder in five or six years. A sum so considerable in those days shows that the property was a valuable one. The house must have been in excellent repair, for it was a comparatively new building, as we

know from the date, 1606, inscribed on a stone modillion of the second story. Rembrandt evidently counted on his annual gains for these successive payments. He now received considerable sums, ranging from 500 to 600 florins, for his portraits and pictures. He was beginning to make a good deal by his etchings; he had further the payments from his pupils, and the occasional legacies that fell to him. In 1640, on the death of an aunt of Saskia's—probably her godmother, for she too was called Saskia—Rembrandt gave his pupil Ferdinand Bol a power of attorney, dated August 30, authorising him to receive his share of her property. The death of his mother shortly afterwards brought him in another sum of money. This had enabled him to pay off half the purchase-money of his house, and thus proclaim his intention of discharging the whole debt as soon as possible. Unhappily, his virtuous zeal was short-lived. He made no further payments, and the accumulated interest on the debt eventually became one of the main causes of his ruin.

But so far the future seemed bright enough. In May of the year 1639, he took up his abode in the house he was to inhabit till the time of disaster, and, as may be readily imagined, set to work at its arrangement and adornment. His home had always been dear to him, and in this, which he hoped would be a permanent one, he delighted to store everything pleasant to the eye, and serviceable to his art. The life he marked out for himself was now, as always, methodical; everything was made subordinate to his work. On this point his biographers are all agreed. Sandrart, Houbraken, and after them Baldinucci, bear witness to the jealous care with which he guarded his working hours. "When he was painting he would not have given audience to the greatest monarch on earth, but would have compelled even such an one to wait, or to come again when he was at leisure." We know he had little love for society, and that he never appeared at any of the gatherings of his brother-artists. Though his pupils, Flinck, Bol, Koninck, and Van den Eeckhout, all figured more or less prominently in public life, he himself was a dweller apart. His name, unlike theirs, appears neither among the members of the Painters' Guild nor among

those of the Civic Guards. When in 1638 Marie de' Medici announced her intention of visiting Amsterdam, the municipality arranged to give her a magnificent reception. While Hooft, at his country house at Muiden, was assembling some of the best known writers of the day—Van Baerle, Dr. Coster, Francisca Duart, and Maria Tesselschade—to celebrate the daughter of the Medici in Latin, Dutch, and Italian poems, the municipality on their part prepared triumphal arches and decorations, the splendours of which they perpetuated in a work published at the civic expense.¹ Moeyaert, De Keyser, Martsen de Jonge, and Sandrart, were employed in the undertaking, but Rembrandt was excluded. He never put himself forward, and was readily forgotten. Neither did he take much pleasure in intercourse with the polished devotees of classic culture who gave the tone to society, and they, on their part, had little sympathy with him. Sandrart's Italian doctrines, and respect for magniloquent tradition were infinitely more to their taste, and in some of the latter's reflections on Rembrandt we find the echo of their grievances against the master. After a passage in which he admits Rembrandt's genius and industry, Sandrart goes on to say: "What he chiefly lacked was a knowledge of Italy, and of other places which afford opportunities for the study of the antique, and of the theory of art." What was to be expected of a painter who, setting at naught "established principles, the usefulness of antiques, Raphael's draughtsmanship and his admirable works, and the academic teaching so necessary to the profession," maintained that "Nature should be the artist's guide, and to her rules only should he submit!" The German painter, a man accustomed to live in the great world, further remarks: "Had he managed his affairs more prudently, and shown more amenity in society, he might have been a richer man. But though he was no spendthrift, he could not maintain his position, and his art suffered from his predilection for the society of the vulgar." ²

¹ *A History of the Reception given to the Queen-Mother of the most Christian King by the Municipality and Citizens of Amsterdam.* J. and C. Bleau. 1638.

² Yet Sandrart himself did not escape Rembrandt's influence, as is evident in his large picture of the *Banquet of the Plenipotentiaries on the Occasion of the Peace of Münster*, dated 1650, in the Nuremberg Town Hall.

Such sentiments were natural enough in a familiar of the Muiden circle, where Sandrart and his works were alike high in favour. Rembrandt, on his side, preferred those simpler folks whose minds were more in touch with the familiar life of the nation, and whose tastes agreed with his own. That intimacy with small tradespeople, and with the lower orders, which scandalised his detractors, profited him more than the acquaintances he might have cultivated among the great, had he been so minded. Among the poor and lowly he found



PORTRAIT OF TITIA VAN UYLENBORCH.

Pen and wash. 1639 (Stockholm Print Room).

opportunities of observing the lively and spontaneous manifestation of feelings he could never have studied in patrician society. Herein lay his strength, that by virtue of the truth and intense vitality of his art, he was able to revivify apparently exhausted themes. By giving shape to the vague aspirations then seething among the masses he had shown the eternal freshness of the greatest subjects.

Though he admitted but few to his own fireside, he could reckon many distinguished men, in whose society he took genuine pleasure, among his relatives and friends. We know that he had secured the lasting affection of members of Saskia's family. He had lately lost the aged Sylvius, who had always shown the warmest attachment to him. The minister died November 19, 1638, after marrying his son in May of the same year. But through the intermediary of the Sylviuses, Rembrandt had made the acquaintance of other clergy of the city, such as Alenson, Eleazar Swalm, and Renier Anslo, whose portrait he afterwards painted. With them, as with the Rabbis and Hebrew scholars of his quarter, he was able to discuss the sacred writings, and the problems of their interpretation. Among his intimates were also collectors and art-dealers, such as his cousin,

Hendrick van Uylenborch, and a certain number of artists, chiefly landscape-painters, like R. Roghman, one of his most constant friends; also a few favourite pupils whom he admitted to his domestic circle.

His own home, however, was all-sufficient for him. There he found



TWO WOMEN IN BEDS, AND OTHER SKETCHES.

About 1640 (B. 369).

the two things dearest to him on earth, his work and his wife, that loving companion who anticipated his every wish, and shared his joys and his sorrows. Unhappily, Saskia's health had given him great cause for anxiety for some time past. Her strength had been severely taxed by the birth of several children. She had lost her

eldest son, who was born at the end of 1635. A daughter, born on July 1, 1638, was baptised at the Oude Kerk on July 22 of the following year, by the name of Cornelia, after Rembrandt's mother. But this child too had died, and on July 29, 1640, a second little daughter was given the same name, in the presence of Frans Copal and Titia van Uylenborch. This child in her turn passed away a month later, and was buried August 24, 1640, in the Zuider Kerk, which had become the parish church of the family on their change of dwelling.

Faithful to his early habits, Rembrandt continued to take Saskia for his model, and the etchings he made from her at this period mark the gradual decline of a constitution never very robust. In a plate of 1636 (B. 365) which contains five sketches of her, together with the turbaned head of an old Turk, she is represented in various head-dresses and draperies, much as she appears in a few pictures of this period, still plump, and full of youthful grace. She has the same blooming appearance in one of three heads on a plate executed about this period (B. 367), which represents her leaning meditatively on her hand, the sunlight falling full on her. In the *Female Heads* of 1636 (B. 368) the oval of the face in that which seems to us the best likeness is a little sharper, and in the *Little Jewish Bride* of 1638 (B. 342), where the master has drawn her in a loose wrapper with her hair unbound, her features are perceptibly thinner. Finally, in the plate containing some half a dozen disconnected studies, probably executed in 1639 (B. 369), we recognise her in two slight sketches. She is represented in bed, and the feverish anxiety of her face seems to betray some secret terror. Her sister Titia probably came to her for a time at this date, for it was then the master made the charming little washed drawing in the Stockholm Museum. Titia's nimble fingers are engaged on some feminine work, over which she bends, spectacles on nose. Rembrandt himself wrote his sister-in-law's name, and the date 1639 beneath the sketch. Saskia's continued ill-health, and the loss of their children, who had followed each other to the grave in such rapid

succession, seem to have greatly depressed the master. Two of the etchings of this period attest his melancholy frame of mind. We have already described the *Death of the Virgin*, the chief figure in which was manifestly inspired by the two sketches on the plate above mentioned. The execution of a very significant allegory, *Youth surprised by Death* (B. 109), must also, we think, be referred to 1639.¹ In this conception Rembrandt reveals the gloomy presentiments that were working in his own mind. A brilliant young couple in rich dresses advance towards the spectator, the woman holding a flower in her hand. At their feet crouches a skeleton, who shows them an hour-glass, reminding them how swiftly the sands of life are running out. These sorrowful fancies were too soon to be realised ; in September or October of 1640 Rembrandt lost his mother. She may have paid her son a short visit the previous year, or, as seems more probable, he may have gone to her at Leyden, and there have painted the bust portrait in the Belvedere, signed and dated 1639, in which she faces the spectator, seated, and leaning upon her stick. Her face has still the same kindly expression, but her broken appearance and air of fatigue and exhaustion proclaim the approaching end.

On the application of her four children, an inventory of her effects was taken preliminary to a division of the estate. This consisted of the house in the Weddesteeg with the land adjoining, several other houses, a few outlying sums of money, a garden, and a half-share in the mill at the White Gate. The net valuation, amounted to 9,960 florins, the share for each child being 2,490 florins. Adriaen, with his sister Lysbeth as coadjutor, undertook the realisation of the property. He was a debtor to the extent of some 1,600 florins to the estate, the administration of which necessitated a new deed of partition on November 2 following.² To relieve Adriaen, Rembrandt had accepted his portion in the form of a mortgage at long date on the share of the mill. But being pressed for money, he gave his brother Willem a power of attorney to sell this mortgage. In

¹ Certainly. *It is signed and dated in that year.*—*F. W.*

² *Oud-Holland*, v. p. 220, and viii. p. 174.

spite of his habitual difficulties, he was the first of the family to repay to Adriaen his part of advances made by the latter on the property to be realised. Anxious to simplify matters as far as possible for his co-heirs, he agreed to their various proposals in that spirit of generous affection which marked all his dealings with his family.



A BEGGAR STANDING.

About 1639 (B. 163).



LANDSCAPE, WITH A MILL-SAIL ABOVE A COTTAGE.
1641 (B. 226).

CHAPTER XIII.

'THE CARPENTER'S HOUSEHOLD' (1640)—'THE MEETING OF ST. ELIZABETH AND THE VIRGIN'—'MANOAH'S PRAYER' (1641)—PORTRAITS OF THIS PERIOD: THE 'LADY WITH THE FAN' AND 'RENIER ANSLO'—ETCHINGS FROM 1640 TO 1642—PICTURES OF THE MILITARY GUILDS IN HOLLAND—'THE SORTIE OF FRANS BANNING COCQ'S COMPANY,' COMMONLY CALLED 'THE NIGHT WATCH' (1642).



A WOMAN WITH A BASKET.
About 1642 (B. 356).

AFTER the death of his mother, Rembrandt naturally sought solace and distraction in his work, and in the affections that still remained to him. And, as may be readily imagined, seeing how intimate the union between his life and art had always been, his works of this period faithfully reflect the thoughts that filled his mind. The subjects that attracted him are all closely allied to his most intimate musings. They are chiefly scenes of family life, in which he seeks to express, even more deeply than

before, joys dearer to him than ever, now that his mother's death and Saskia's failing health had suggested their uncertainty. The smaller dimensions to which he returned in these works allowed of greater care and finish, and enabled him to give a more personal and penetrating charm of expression to every detail. Throughout Rembrandt's career, we shall note these unexpected recurrences to

an earlier manner. After a series of large pictures, painted with the utmost breadth and vigour, he constantly goes back to the small canvases of his first period, and accommodates his handling to their dimensions.

The *Carpenter's Household* in the Louvre, signed, and dated 1640, is one of the best among the small pictures painted by Rembrandt at this date. The composition is extremely simple. A young woman, whose sweet, dignified face is seen in profile, is seated beside a cradle, suckling a child, whom the old grandmother turns from her book to caress. The father planes a board near the high window to the left. Around these four figures, in an interior which serves the double purpose of workshop and living-room, are ranged the tools and utensils of their modest home. A cat purrs contentedly at a little distance from the group. The sprays of the vine that clusters about the open window are relieved against a deep blue sky, and the sunshine pours gaily into the room, falling full on the mother and child. The minute finish, the delicate modelling, the radiant aspects both of life and nature in this work, seem to suggest that the painter had put forth all his powers to shed lustre on this poetic conception of work and family life—the two things dearest to him upon earth.

The *Meeting of St. Elizabeth and the Virgin*, also signed, and dated 1640, is in the Grosvenor House collection. It has the same technical qualities, and the same poetic charm. The old couple, informed of Mary's approach, hasten to meet her. Zacharias, a venerable man with a long white beard, hurries down the steps in front of his house with the help of a boy on whom he leans for support. Elizabeth has outstripped him, staff in hand; and embraces her cousin, gazing at her with tender reverence. The young girl submits to her caresses in some confusion at the honour with which she is received. The skilfully grouped figures are surrounded by the picturesque disorder of a farm yard, with climbing plants and scattered animals, a goose, some fowls, a peacock on a wall. The easy elegance of the handling equals the charm of the chiaroscuro. The light



falls full on the two women, the central group of the cheerful scene, and the spectator's attention is at once riveted on them. Elizabeth's somewhat sombre dress, and the shadow cast on her face by her yellowish wimple, accentuate the brilliant figure of the Virgin, the flower-like freshness and harmony of her many-tinted garments, the sweet refinement of her innocent face, and the delicate bloom of a complexion pink and transparent as a briar-rose.

In 1641 Rembrandt executed a more important work, the *Manoah's Prayer* in the Dresden Gallery. The subject was one to which he was anxious to do justice, for he made two preliminary drawings for this picture; one is in the Stockholm Print-room, the other in the Berlin Museum. The composition in the former, the more finished and elaborate of the two, agrees with that of the picture. The other, which is probably the later work, consists merely of a few strokes drawn with a hasty, feverish touch, and presents quite a different aspect of the scene. Manoah's awe and amazement at the angel's heavenward flight, his wife's terror at the thought that the divine vision may cause their death, these were the features of the sacred story which Rembrandt emphasised in his striking interpretation of the episode. It is much to be regretted that he made no further use of the angel in this drawing, and that he discarded the boldly rendered spiral of smoke in which the ascending figure floats from sight. The angel of the Dresden picture is a truly grotesque conception—a clumsy, loutish boy, encumbered by a long tunic, whose wings seem quite insufficient for his support. On the other hand, the life-size figures of Manoah and his wife are among the most beautiful and touching of artistic creations. Never did the master so eloquently express the intimate communion of two souls, mingling in the fervour of a common prayer. Their reverent devotion impresses itself on the spectator, and so absorbs him that he scarcely notes the breadth and simplicity of the execution, the dignified cast of the draperies, and the magnificent quality of the skilfully contrasted reds. In Manoah's robes these are somewhat subdued, while in his wife's they glow with extraordinary

intensity, both tones blending into absolute harmony with the smoking entrails of the sacrificial victim.

Something of the same charm that marks these Biblical compositions may be traced in several portraits of this period. Rembrandt had always taken pleasure in painting old men, and it may be that memories of the mother he had lately lost influenced him in his predilection for old women as models at this stage of his career.



STUDY FOR "MANOAH'S PRAYER."

Pen and wash. 1641 (Stockholm Print Room).

Among his portraits of these we may mention one belonging to Lord Yarborough, which figured in the Winter Exhibition of 1890. It represents an old woman of about eighty, seated with folded hands in an arm-chair. She wears a loose jacket of dark velvet bordered with fur, a white ruff, and a white cap. A kindly expression beams through the network of wrinkles on the aged face, and Dr. Bode justly praises "the distribution of the lights, and

the broad, fat painting of the carnations, through the shadows of which the rich brown of the transparent ground appears here and there."¹ A portrait very much akin to this in the Six collection at Amsterdam is dated 1641, and represents Anna Wymer, mother of the Burgomaster Six. She too is seated in an arm-chair almost

¹ Bode, p. 461, *Studien*. A replica of this portrait which we once saw in a collection in Paris bears the date 1640, with the age of the sitter, eighty-seven years. It appeared to be an old copy, smaller and less frank in manner. Another copy, probably by J. Backer, was sold by auction in London in March, 1889.

facing the spectator, and wears a costume the elegance of which is tempered by a certain austerity—a black dress trimmed with fur, a stiffly-gauffered collar, and over her smooth hair a white cap. The pleasant face of this elderly sitter—she was fifty-seven at the date of this portrait—her high, broad forehead, the gentle gaze of her dim eyes, suggest a loyal, benevolent nature, and the careful finish of



STUDY FOR "MANOAH'S PRAYER."
Pen drawing (Berlin Print Room).

the execution even in the smallest details, shows an evident desire on Rembrandt's part to please a family high in repute as citizens, and well disposed towards the arts—a family with whom he was soon to form a close and lasting friendship.

Portraits of well-known persons and of the master's friends are rarer at this period than before, and are more carefully

treated. Among them is a work famous not only by reason of the price recently paid for it, but further in connection with the name by which it has been known for over a century—*Le Doreur* (*Rembrandt's Gilder*). At the Duc de Morny's sale this portrait was bought in for £6,200 (155,000 francs) by his widow. She sold it shortly afterwards to an American purchaser, and it is now in Mr. Havemeyer's collection. In answer to Vosmaer's suggestion that the traditional title *Doreur* was probably a corruption of Doomer, the name of one of Rembrandt's pupils. Dr. Bode points out that in 1640—the date on the portrait—Doomer was barely twenty years old, whereas the sitter is obviously forty at least. Vosmaer's hypothesis has proved quite compatible with the received tradition, however; for a document lately discovered by Dr. Bredius shows the sitter to have been, not the painter Lambert Doomer, but his father Paulus, gilder and frame-maker—"lystemaker." Here again the brushwork is delicate, minute, and highly fused; and this execution, which harmonises admirably with the age and character of the old ladies painted at this period, is in curious contrast with the energetic and somewhat coarse personality of the *Gilder*, the masculine vigour of whose features is accentuated by the shadow cast by his broad-brimmed hat, and by the white ruff encircling his face. In these perhaps involuntary reversions to the timidity of his early handling, the master gives fresh evidence of those conscientious doubts which beset him when about to adopt greater breadth and freedom of manner. This somewhat petty touch, reappears, strange to say, in a portrait of himself in the National Gallery (painted the same year) in which he is represented leaning his right arm on a balustrade, his face turned three-quarters to the front. He wears a gray doublet with a straight collar, over which is thrown a brown robe trimmed with black velvet and fur. As in the portrait of the *Gilder*, the white chemisette and the brown cap with vandyked edges bring out the vitality and force of the face, its keen gaze, and bold intelligence of expression. But the somewhat tame handling, and the evenness of the laboured impasto detract greatly



from that spirited ease so characteristic of the master's renderings of himself.

A pair of portraits executed the following year are marked by the same conscientious thoroughness, but are freer and more masterly in treatment. The man's portrait is in the Brussels Museum, that of his wife at Buckingham Palace. Both are signed, and dated 1641. The husband is turned slightly to the right, and wears a broad-brimmed hat, a cloak edged with velvet, and a ruff and cuffs bordered with lace. He holds his gloves in one hand, and rests the other on a window-sill. His face is placid, his attitude calm and simple; the expression and the careful modelling of the head admirably suggest the sitter's individuality. Remarkable as this work is, it in no wise equals the pendant, the so-called *Lady with the Fan*, a work which is undoubtedly one of Rembrandt's masterpieces in this *genre*. The young matron faces the spectator, her fan in one hand, the other resting against the window-frame. The utmost refinement of tasteful elegance is displayed in her rich dress. She has no great beauty of feature, her eyes are small, her nose rather long. But the sweet contours of the face, the lower part of which is slightly in shadow, the high, pure forehead, above which the fair hair waves in graceful abundance, the candid expression, the touch of melancholy in the gaze, are so sympathetically observed and delicately rendered as to give an irresistible charm and distinction to the gentle sitter. The spectator turns reluctantly from this exquisite work, the beautiful presentment of a pure and lofty soul.

Two pictures belonging to Count Lanckoroncki of Vienna, signed and dated 1641 like the above, enjoyed a great reputation even in the last century. They are known as *The Jewish Bride* and *The Bride's Father counting out her Dowry*, and these titles, together with Schmidt's engravings, did much to make them popular. But their cold tonality, their execution, and pallid colour, no less than certain peculiarities in the types and composition, suggest grave doubts as to their authenticity. We share the opinion expressed by various critics

that they are the work of Rembrandt's pupil, Christophel Paudiss, several of whose pictures are in the Vienna Museum. This, as we have already pointed out, is no isolated instance of false ascriptions in connection with well-known pictures in famous collections. The two portraits by Ferdinand Bol in Lord Ashburton's collection which bear forged signatures of Rembrandt's name belong to the same year (1641).



PORTRAIT OF A MAN.
1641 (Brussels Museum).

Lady Ashburnham however owns a fine work of this period, the authenticity of which is above suspicion. It is another example of those double portraits so admirably typified by *The Ship-builder and his Wife*. The picture is dated 1641, and has been variously described as *Renier Anslo with his Mother* and *Renier Anslo with his Wife*, although, as Dr. Bode remarks, the apparent ages of the sitters agree with neither designation. The male model was undoubtedly Anslo; Rembrandt, who

was perhaps a personal friend of the minister's, made two drawings of him in 1640, from one of which (now in the British Museum) he executed the etching of the same year.¹ The other, a pen drawing with bistre, which was bought by Baron E. de Rothschild for £292 (7,300 francs) at the Galichon sale, is a study for Lady Ashburnham's picture. Anslo's minis-

¹ The signs of the tracing process employed for the etching, which is reversed, are to be found on the drawing in the British Museum.



terial functions are suggested by the introduction of a young woman dressed in black, no doubt a widow, to whom, with a gesture at once authoritative and benevolent, he offers the consolation of some passage in the open Bible before him. The



RENIER ANSLO.

1641 (B. 271).

composition is peculiarly striking; the expression of earnest conviction in the face of the minister, a man in the prime of life,¹ and the respectful attention with which the young mourner

¹ Anslo, who was born in 1592, was fifty-one at the time. He died five years later. See E. W. Moes, *Iconographia Batava*.

receives his exhortation, exemplify Rembrandt's marvellous clarity and directness in the rendering of his conceptions. The masterly execution is well adapted to the dimensions of the canvas, and the perfection of the accessories—the branched candelabrum, the parchments and books strewn upon the table—would do credit to the most consummate painter of still-life; while Rembrandt alone possessed the secret of the mingled firmness and delicacy evinced in such details as the harmonising of these various objects with the dark red table-cover, the yellowish gray background, and the sombre dresses of the figures; and still more admirably evinced in the glowing carnations, and in the contrast between the broad masculine vigour of the minister's personality, and the refined features of his youthful visitor.

Compared with these important and carefully considered works, the etchings of this period are somewhat slight and hasty. They seem to have been the master's relaxation from his more arduous labours. Yet even these rapid sketches, drawn directly on the copper, show his absolute command of every resource of the art. Studies of the Virgin had apparently a special fascination for him at this date. We have already dealt with the *Death of the Virgin*, the large plate of 1639, by far the best and most important of the series. In further proof of his interest in this particular subject we may mention the etchings of the *Virgin mourning the Death of Jesus* (B. 85) and the *Virgin with the Infant Jesus in the Clouds* (B. 61), executed in 1641, which followed closely on the larger plate. But in other examples of this date the master simply notes some fresh aspect of episodes already treated in pictures or engravings. To begin with subjects from the Scriptures, we find a *Beheading of John the Baptist*, more remarkable for originality than for pathos, executed in 1640 (B. 92). The composition is successfully modified in parts in a drawing in the Albertina. This plate was followed by various others dealing with subjects which had attracted Rembrandt in his first period. In the *Baptism of the Eunuch*, dated 1641 (B. 98), his point is as free and flowing as though



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

he were sketching with a pen on paper. Around the devout figure of the kneeling Eunuch we note all that exuberance of Oriental convention into which the master's uncertain taste occasionally betrayed him. This is especially pronounced in the figure of the cavalier who stolidly watches the scene from a distance. The *Little Resurrection of Lazarus* of 1642 (B. 72) is homelier and less dramatic in character than the large plate of ten years earlier, and the head of Christ is vulgar in conception, and rather clumsy in treatment. A bare mention will suffice for the *Descent from the Cross* and the *St. Jerome* (B. 82 and 105), both executed in 1642. They are of little interest, the execution in both being hurried and perfunctory. In the *St. Jerome*, as in the *Schoolmaster* of 1641 (B. 128) and the *Man absorbed in Meditation* (B. 148), probably a plate of the same year, Rembrandt abandons his usual deliberate building up of a desired effect of chiaroscuro, for a hastiness which has resulted in exaggeration of the contrasts, and opacity in the shadows. But these harsh and loaded plates are mere accidents in the *œuvre* of this period. He errs rather in the direction of over-slightness, and in the fervour of improvisation is content to note merely the most essential and expressive features. He troubles himself little about correctness, and allows his fiery imagination free play. The breathless, impetuous handling of the three *Lion Hunts* of 1641 (B. 114, 115, and 116), the animation of the figures, the wild rush of the horses, the turmoil and confusion of the furious *mêlée*, very adequately suggest such scenes. The hunted beasts, however, are incorrectly drawn, and recall the heraldic lions of the master's early *St. Jeromes*. There is little to corroborate Vosmaer in his assumption that Rembrandt utilised studies made from the lions of a travelling menagerie that passed through Amsterdam in 1641. Van Baerle certainly mentions the visit in a letter of November 23, 1641, and speaks of the intelligence displayed by one of the elephants. There is also a study by Rembrandt in the Munich Print Room, dated 1641, for which this elephant was probably the model.¹ But it is impossible to suppose that Rembrandt could

¹ Rembrandt had drawn elephants before this, however. One of his sketches of these beasts belongs to Mr. George Salting, another is in the Albertina. Both were made in

have shown such ignorance of leonine forms as he displays in the etchings of 1641, had he already made any of those remarkable studies of lions, in which he so admirably suggested their attitudes and characteristics at a later period.

The etchings from nature executed by Rembrandt at this date are infinitely more to our taste than these hasty compositions. He bestowed neither more time nor trouble on them than on the latter, but at least he worked from a basis of reality. They furnish ever-increasing proofs of the flexibility of his genius, and of that untiring industry which marked his career. The landscapes which now began to appear in his *œuvre* we may leave for future consideration, confining ourselves here to those portraits, domestic scenes, and studies of animals on which his graver was successively employed. To 1641 belongs the *Portrait of a Child* (B. 310) with long hair and attractive features, to which the title *William II.* was formerly given, in deference to that mania for¹ conjectural identifications to which we have already alluded. Two other plates of this year are: the *Man with a Crucifix and Chain* (B. 261), a sharp-featured, melancholy personage, and the *Card-player* (B. 136), in which we recognise the same model. The *Man in an Arbour* (B. 257), the *Woman with a Basket* (B. 356), the *Old Woman in Spectacles*, (B. 362), and the *Woman in a large white Hood* (B. 359) are all works of 1642. Charles Blanc supposes the last of these plates to be a portrait of Saskia, an opinion in which we cannot concur. All four are drawn with a firm, spirited touch, and are marked by extraordinary vigour and vitality. In some instances, as for example in the *Old Man raising his Hand to his Cap* (B. 259), which also belongs to this period, the master has sketched in his subject, and begun the shading of the face and hands, only to leave the plate unfinished.¹ If a prepared plate was not always ready, he would work on any available space left on a partially covered surface. Thus, in the print of

1637. From one of them he drew the little elephant in the *Adam and Eve* of 1638, the plate described in Chapter XI.

¹ In 1770 this plate fell into the hands of a printseller at Berlin, who induced G. F. Schmidt to finish it. Fifty impressions were printed, in which the additions may be readily detected.



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

the *Virgin with the Infant Jesus* (B. 61), a small female head, bearing no relation to the subject, has been left by the master among the clouds of the background.

The carelessness of these hasty sketches shows them to have been Rembrandt's recreation in the intervals of more laborious undertakings. The same hurried execution characterises the *Reconciliation of David and Absalom*, a picture with small figures, dated 1642, formerly in a pavilion in the Park at Peterhof, and lately removed to the Hermitage. The figures of the father and son, arrayed in Turkish costume, are peculiar rather than expressive; and the background, with its fantastic architecture and precipitous mountains, is far from happy in conception. Both actors and scenery, as M. Paul Mantz observes, "have an air of sham Orientalism suggestive of a masquerade." Rembrandt's mind was absorbed in a greater conception. The masterpiece he had doubtless begun the year before, left him but little time or thought for lesser works. The *Night Watch* was on his easel. But we shall perhaps be better able to appreciate this great picture if we briefly consider that special branch of painting to which it belongs, and the various works of the same class that preceded it.

We have already described the important part played in Holland by those guilds or corporations which embodied national enterprise at the most glorious period of Dutch history. Among these bodies none were more important and influential than the military companies. Unlike kindred associations in Flanders, which consistently preserved their original semi-religious character, the civic corps of the northern Netherlands soon adopted a purely national and independent organisation. Encouraged by the clergy and princes, to whom they furnished guards of honour in the early years of their formation, they gradually developed and extended. Their recruits were drawn from among the most prominent inhabitants of each city, and on them the civic authorities relied for the maintenance of public order and safety. Each guild had its place of assembly, or *Doelen*, and its drilling-ground, where its annual shooting competitions were held. The victor in these was proclaimed to the sound of trumpets;

a feast was held in his honour, and he generally received a prize from the town. In the primitive days these prizes were of no great value, and consisted for the most part of a silver cup or a few spoons. The prizes for contests between neighbouring towns were more important, and included drinking-horns, chains of silver-gilt with medallions, and gold or silver vases richly chased. These were kept in the halls of the corporations, and formed a sort of reserve fund. When the drill was over the chiefs of the corporation were elected, and on these, together with the victor in the shooting competition, the administration devolved for the ensuing year. At the conclusion of the solemnity the outgoing chiefs gave an account of their stewardship, and the proceedings ended with a banquet. The offices of captain and lieutenant were greatly prized, and the ensign chosen was generally the wealthiest and handsomest young man in the company. He had the privilege of wearing a more brilliant uniform than his brother-officers. The esteem⁴¹ in which these divers grades were held tended, of course, to flatter the vanity of successful candidates. These dignitaries gradually made it a custom to perpetuate their transient honours in portraits which they presented to their guilds to hang in the halls of the *Doelens*. The destination of these pictures justified the exclusion of those religious subjects which still maintained their supremacy among the Flemings. Relieved of any lingering scruples on this score, the heads of the guilds were able to indulge their very excusable pride in such presentments of themselves in full military array, decked with the insignia of their various grades. Their subordinates, consumed by that passion for uniforms which characterises the citizen of all nationalities, soon began to manœuvre for a place beside their officers on these canvases. The chiefs, as may be supposed, readily accorded them a privilege which lightened their own share of the artist's charges, and further magnified their office by emphasising their superiority and importance. A graduated scale of subscriptions was arranged before the commission was given, determined by the relative rank of the members, the means at their disposal, and the pretensions of the chosen painter; and thus, at a very modest cost to individual members, the *Doelens*



Printed by Draeger & Lesieur, Paris

gradually accumulated pictures, and became museums of considerable importance. As every town in Holland had its military guild, the interest in this special branch of art soon became general throughout the country; it was, in fact, a national *genre*, and may be said to have developed in great measure on parallel lines with the national history.

The first portrait groups of civic guards were composed on much the same lines as those of the religious associations. They consisted of rows of portraits ranged in double or single lines, without any attempt at unity or fusion. The works of Dirck Jacobsz, Cornelis Teunissen, and Dirck Barentsz in the Ryksmuseum, ranging from 1529 to 1561, are all typical examples, though they vary considerably in artistic merit. In all the arrangement is practically identical, but the artists make an attempt to put some sort of animation into the faces of their sitters, and to diversify the accessories in their hands. As a rule the civic warriors are painted in sombre costumes, and appear to be debating some question with all the gravity of theologians; or they are represented in the act of dividing a meagre fish, the dispatch of which is to be aided by the modest libations afforded by a jug of beer, passing round the table.¹ From the year 1566 to 1579 no pictures of the civic guards were painted. The members of the various corporations had sterner work in hand, and had thrown themselves heart and soul into the cause of national defence and enfranchisement. In response to the appeal of William of Orange, in 1573, they formed themselves into volunteer companies, at Gouda, Dordrecht, Delft and Rotterdam, in aid of the besieged Haarlemers, and it is hardly too much to say that the ultimate triumph of Dutch independence was due to this spirit of solidarity, which urged the various civic guilds to join forces against the common foe. After the war, many of the corporations were re-organised on a broader basis, and their *Doelens* were considerably enlarged. They retained their ancient names, but these were purely distinctive, and had no longer any reference to religious patronage. Certain guilds which

¹ For further details in connection with these pictures of the military guilds, see my study in the *Revue des deux Mondes* for December 15, 1890.

were formed by subdivision of the original body, were distinguished from the parent company merely by the appellation *new*, while the older branch was known as *the old*; thus we hear of the *old* and *new* guilds of St. George or of St. Sebastian. There was a strong spirit of rivalry between the various bodies, and the competitions to which they challenged each other became more and more extensive. The *Doelens*, too, were more luxuriously furnished and arranged. The walls were hung with tapestries, and the plate increased in costliness. Gaily-coloured banners were suspended at intervals, with patriotic inscriptions: *Pro aris et focis; Hâc nitimur, hanc tuemur; Concordia facit vim*, etc.

In the pictures that were the chief ornaments of these halls, it is natural to expect a certain modification after the war. It might have been supposed that the painters, many of whom had taken part in the stirring events of the times, would have been anxious to record some of the brilliant exploits of their militant burgesses, and preserve the memory of their heroism. Strange to say, we can find no trace of any such ambition. The portraits painted after the war revert to the convention of the earlier works, and the sitters are arranged in the same monotonous rows. The only sign of progress is an evident desire on the part of the artist to give something more of animation to the faces, and to group the figures round the table rather more picturesquely. The sitters were generally represented glass in hand, and this motive at last became such a favourite one, that it was universally adopted. The composition, indeed, varies so little in works of this class, that they are to be differentiated only by the varying degrees of skill and care that characterise their execution. Among the towns which produced important works of this class, Haarlem and the Hague rank first. The masterpieces of Hals and of Jan van Ravesteyn in the museums of the two cities attest their superiority. Remarkable as these works are, however, they excel rather in beauty of technique than in novelty of conception. They were paid for, like the earlier portrait groups, by contributions from each member of the guild who desired a place on the canvas. It is evident that such a system was calculated to seriously embarrass the painter. He had to reckon with the claims and susceptibilities of a number of

models, who, having contributed their share to the work, were all ambitious of a prominent position in the group.

Pictures of the civic guards were even more popular in Amsterdam than at Haarlem and the Hague, and this branch of art was brought to its highest perfection among the distinguished painters then so numerous in the city.

Cornelis Ketel, whose artificial elegance is somewhat alien to the Dutch ideal, and Aert Pietersen, whose rough sincerity more faithfully reflected the types and manners of his contemporaries, were followed by Rembrandt's immediate predecessors, Cornelis van der Voort, Werner van Valckert, Elias Pickenoy, an artist too long forgotten, whose contemporary reputation is fully justified by works now collected in the Ryksmuseum, and finally, Thomas de Keyser, who, as we have endeavoured to show, exercised an undeniable influence over Rembrandt on his first arrival in Amsterdam. But these artists excelled chiefly in their portrait-groups of the *Regents* or Governors of the various charitable institutions. In the large canvases they occasionally painted for the military corporations there are but slight traces of any imaginative faculty. They were content to reproduce the hackneyed traditional arrangement, with unimportant modifications. And we shall find, as on other occasions in art history, that the few works which make some attempt at originality of treatment, were produced by mediocre painters, who, despairing of compelling attention by their talents, sought distinction by the ingenuity of their devices. This, indeed, is the sole redeeming quality of a picture in the Ryksmuseum by Claes Pietersz Lastman, the brother of Rembrandt's master. Commissioned to paint *The Officers of Captain Boom's Company*, it occurred to him to illustrate a military episode very honourable to the company, who had taken part in the defence of Zwolle against the Spaniards in 1623. Unhappily, his arrangement of the figures in stiff parallel lines is childish in its *naïveté*, and the harsh, discordant colour is without relief of any kind. Sandrart was scarcely more successful with his large canvas of 1638,

Captain van Swieten's Company turning out to escort Marie de' Medici on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Amsterdam. It might have been supposed that the German artist, who prided himself on his academic training, would have devised some unexpected combination in connection with such a theme. His work, however, is commonplace to a degree.

We shall find that the majority of painters who treated these subjects simply adopted the conventional arrangement of their predecessors. Very few among them attempted to modify the traditional treatment, and the timidity of their efforts, or the feebleness of their powers, rendered all such essays abortive. It had never occurred to any of them to represent the companies engaged in any of those military exercises which were the sole objects of their formation. Such a conception was reserved for Rembrandt, when he, in his turn, received a commission to paint a large picture for the newly erected Hall of the Amsterdam Musketeers. Rembrandt, we know, was not the man to bow his neck to the yoke of accepted tradition, nor to yield to the exactions that had hampered former painters of such compositions. He claimed absolute liberty. When, on first establishing himself at Amsterdam, he found himself the fashionable portrait-painter of the hour, he may have made momentary concessions to the caprices of his sitters. But he had now been independent for some years, and had gradually abandoned himself more and more to the somewhat fantastic strain in his character. Large pictures and compositions, in which he could give his powers free scope, had now greater attractions for him, and the proposed subject was a congenial one. It combined realism with an appeal to the imagination, and evoked memories of his childhood and youth at Leyden.

Did his patrons suggest the episode to be represented, or was the inspiration entirely Rembrandt's own? We know not. But it seems probable that the captain of the company recommended the master, then in the heyday of his popularity, to the other members of the civic guard. This captain, Frans Banning Cocq, was one of the foremost



Printed by Daeger & Lesieur. Paris

citizens of Amsterdam at this period. Possessed of a considerable patrimony to which he had added largely, partly by his own exertions, partly by marriage with a daughter of the Burgomaster Volckert Overlander, he had purchased the seignory of Purmerland in 1618, and had been granted a patent of nobility by James II in 1620. A man of intelligence and taste, he was probably quite willing to give the master a free hand in the execution of his commission. Added to which, the programme submitted to him by Rembrandt was well calculated to flatter his vanity. The proposed originality of treatment, coupled with the name of Rembrandt, ensured the notoriety of a work in which he, as captain, was to occupy the most prominent place. In consideration of the painter's reputation, 1600 florins were offered him in payment, a sum greatly in excess of any hitherto received for such works. The subscription of each person destined to figure in the picture was, on an average, one hundred florins, a little more or less, according to the more or less conspicuous position he was to occupy.

After careful examination of the various studies and commentaries of which this picture has been the subject, the particular episode Rembrandt portrayed is perfectly clear to us. The erroneous title of *The Night Watch*, by which the picture is traditionally known, may be disregarded; the true designation is appended to a water-colour sketch of the composition, made between 1650 and 1660 for an album belonging to Banning Cocq himself. This sketch still remains in the family of its original owner,¹ and is inscribed: *The young Lord of Purmerland gives the order to march to his lieutenant, Heer van Vlaerdingen*. During Rembrandt's life-time, there was no question as to the subject of the composition; the name by which it was commonly known is recorded by Baldinucci on the evidence of Rembrandt's pupil, Bernard Keilh, the Danish painter already mentioned,² according to whose unimpeachable testimony the episode represented is a *March out (ordinanza)*. Banning Cocq commanded

¹ It belongs to Mr. de Graeff van Polsbroeck, Minister to the late King of Holland.

² *Cominciamento e progresso dell' arte dell' intagliare in rame*, by F. Baldinucci.

the civic guards of the First Ward of the City (*Wyk* No. 1), and, as Mr. Meyer suggests, it may be that Rembrandt's former location in the district influenced his patrons in their choice of a painter. He had been an inhabitant of the ward till about the summer of 1639, he probably had many acquaintances among the members of the Company, and had doubtless often witnessed scenes such as that he painted. The work is so familiar to students that it is unnecessary to describe it; more especially as M. Dujardin's heliogravure provides our readers with a careful transcript of its main features.

The Night Watch has been the subject of many deeply interesting studies of late. Among them, we may mention those published by Messrs. Bredius and Meyer in Holland, and M. Durand-Gréville in France.¹ Its history has been thoroughly sifted, and many curious details have come to light in connection with the circumstances under which it was painted, its successive migrations, and the mutilations it has undergone. Within the last few years, much of its pristine brilliance has been restored under Mr. Hopman's prudent and skilful treatment. The moment is favourable for a review of the various new elements available for a critical examination of the subject, and it will be interesting to see how far these tend to modify existing appreciations of a work which has been the subject of so much controversy.

Fascinated by the proposed theme, Rembrandt began his task at once. In spite of the difficulties and complexities of the episode he was about to treat, he seems to have dispensed with everything in the nature of serious preparatory study for this large canvas. No sketch of the composition as a whole has ever been discovered. The only studies extant are two hasty sketches of the central group, belonging to M. Léon Bonnat, one in black chalk, the

¹ Messrs. Bredius' and Meyer's studies appeared in *Les Chefs-d'œuvre du Musée d'Amsterdam* and in *Oud-Holland*, and M. Durand-Gréville has published a variety of articles bearing on the subject in *La Revue bleue*, *L'Artiste*, and the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*.

other a pen drawing. Rembrandt was destined to pay dearly for this neglect during the course of his work. The absence of preliminary study fully accounts for the inequalities and faults of proportion, as for the various re-paints and corrections that disfigure the picture. Exception has not unreasonably been taken to the motley costumes and heterogeneous weapons of the company, and the extraordinary confusion that seems to obtain among the troop says little for its discipline. We may add that, in spite of the various explanations proposed, several of the figures are curiously enigmatical. What, for instance, was the painter's object in the introduction of the two little girls, one of whom has a cock hanging from her girdle? Is the bird, as Mr. Meyer suggests, a rebus on the Captain's name? Or, as seems more probable, was it a prize for which the marksmen were to compete? Or had Rembrandt, as Fromentin believes, no special intention with regard to these two little figures? Did he introduce them merely because he felt that some such high-toned passage was needed, and would add greatly to the effect of his composition? We might further inquire why all the actors in the drama are so agitated, whither they are hurrying, and where they are supposed to be? Criticism of the anecdotic order has offered solutions more or less plausible for all these problems, determining what historic event led to this sortie, and endeavouring to identify the gate from which the company has issued, and the bridge it is about to cross. It is our own opinion that in these minor matters Rembrandt gave free play to his fancy. He chose the most picturesque elements of the actual scene, and combined them with details suggested by his imaginative instinct, thus summing up all the essential and characteristic features of such an episode.

To us, we must confess, the master's intention seems patent at the first glance. The incident is unquestionably a call to arms of the civic guard. The two officers have hastened to the domicile of the company; they seek to stimulate the zeal of their followers by pressing forward themselves. The captain gives his orders to the lieutenant; behind them the drum beats the alarm, and the ensign unfurls his

standard. Every man snatches up a weapon of some sort, musket, lance, or halberd. Dogs bark; children, eager to share in the commotion, slip in among the soldiers. The composition agrees on every point with the idea it suggests, and there is no room for doubt as to the theme. But fault has been found with the work on another score. It has been pointed out that the canvas is crowded to excess; that it affords no repose to the eye; and has the appearance of being pent in and imprisoned by the frame. The feet of the two officers touch the edge in the centre; the drum on the right, the child who is running, and the man seated on the parapet to the left are cut in two by the frame. The effect of this is extremely startling and unpleasant. The composition has no definite limits, and instead of gradually melting away, as it were, is suddenly cut short at either end. But for these undeniable blemishes the master is in no wise accountable. They are due, not to Rembrandt, but to those who mutilated his creation.

The fact of these mutilations has been completely established, in spite of Vosmaer and De Vries, whose patriotic sentiments moved them to discredit it. Dr. J. Dyserinck fully discussed the question in a study recently published in Holland,¹ and tells us why and when this act of vandalism was committed. He learnt from documents among the archives, that the *Night Watch* was placed in the Hall of the Musketeers' *Doelen* in 1642, and was eventually removed to the Town Hall of Amsterdam. The transfer was decided upon in 1682, but was deferred on various occasions, and was not finally accomplished till May, 1715. It was then the mutilation a contemporary picture-restorer has recorded took place. J. van Dyck, in his description of the pictures in the Amsterdam Town Hall,² remarks, that in order to suit the picture to the dimensions of its appointed place between the two doors of the small council-chamber, "it was found necessary to cut off two figures to the right of the canvass, and part of the drum to

¹ See the periodical, *De Gids* (1890).

² *Kunst en Historiekundige Beschryving von alle de Schilderyen op het Stadhuis te Amsterdam*, 1758.



the left, as may be seen by comparison of the original with the copy in Heer Boendermaker's possession." Barbarous as such a proceeding appears to us, it was very lightly regarded in the last century. Collectors and dealers occasionally cut up pictures, making two or more out of one, and it is not unusual to find works in public galleries or private collections, the original dimensions of which have been modified, either to accommodate them to some particular space, or merely to make them fit some frame in the owner's possession. The copy cited by Van Dyck in support of his assertion was long supposed to be Rembrandt's own study for the large picture, or a replica. It was made, however, by a painter of rustic subjects, named Gerrit Lundens, a contemporary of Rembrandt, but of a later generation.¹ It was executed before the transfer of the picture to the Town Hall, and is, on the whole, a very faithful reproduction of the master's work in its entirety, corresponding almost exactly with Mr. de Graeff van Poelsbroeck's water-colour.² The identity of proportion in the two makes it possible to estimate the approximate dimensions of the strips shorn from Rembrandt's work at 26 × 11 inches. In the light of the information now accessible, the student may form a fair idea of the picture in its original state, when the composition was, of course, better placed on the canvas, with an ample margin below, and a restful space in partial shadow on either side. The central group, though to the full as important as now, did not then divide the picture into two equal parts; the masses were consequently better balanced and more rhythmical.

Certain defects in the rendering of chiaroscuro and values, though less obvious, no doubt, when the work first left Rembrandt's studio, must nevertheless be laid to the master's account. The lights are too much broken, the contrasts too numerous and too violent. But other blemishes proceed entirely from injuries sustained by the

¹ Lundens' picture was in the Randon de Boisset collection for a time. It now belongs to the National Gallery.

² The mediocre engraving of the *Night Watch*, executed by Claessens in 1797, was probably made from Lundens' copy.

picture in the course of years. Very little care was bestowed on works of art in the *Doelens*, which were practically tap-rooms. Tobacco-smoke and the fumes from peat-fires soon blackened the pictures on the walls. They were re-varnished from time to time, but the accumulated dirt was never properly removed, and was therefore firmly embedded in the successive strata. Van Dyck mentions the accumulation of rancid oil and varnish he had to remove from the *Night Watch*; but the cleaning to which he subjected the picture can hardly have been very thorough, for in a short time it seems to have been again in a deplorable state. The tones had darkened so much, and the shadows had become so black, that Reynolds could scarcely recognise Rembrandt's handiwork, when he saw it in 1781. Its appearance at this date fully accounted for the title *The Night Watch*, bestowed upon it in the eighteenth century. The darkness that was gradually invading the canvas seemed to justify the misnomer.

The restoration of the picture was long delayed, owing to the difficulties of the undertaking. At last, however, it could no longer be deferred, and in 1889, Mr. Hopman accomplished it, with complete success. The superficial stratum of oil and varnish, which had become rough and opaque, was rubbed down; it was then made transparent by exposing the canvas to the fumes of cold alcohol. The picture regained its pristine brilliance, to the astonishment of those most familiar with it, who now found it necessary greatly to modify the estimate they had formed of it in its degenerate state. The blacks have recovered their rich, velvety quality, the light colours their freshness, and although the contrasts have become more marked in the process, the transparent shadows so modify the transitions, that there is no hardness in the effects. Many passages that were almost invisible have come to light; the eye is charmed by countless unsuspected beauties, but in spite of the mass of detail that has emerged, the composition has gained unity and harmony, as a whole. The much-dreaded operation, to which the authorities at last regretfully resigned themselves, has had, in short, the happiest results. It is now evident

enough that Rembrandt painted the scene in sunlight. There is not the slightest indication of artificial light, and it is even possible to deduce the exact position of the sun at the moment, from the shadow cast by Banning Cocq's hand on his lieutenant's tunic. It must have been well above the horizon to the left. M. Durand-Gréville, however, rather over-shoots the mark when he talks of the "brilliant effects of sunlight," and of the picture



COPY OF REMBRANDT'S "NIGHT WATCH."

By G. Lundens (National Gallery).

in its original state as a very light one. Contemporary testimony is uniformly opposed to these assertions. Setting aside the conditions under which Rembrandt executed the work, and his numerous corrections and repaints, which, as Vosmaer justly remarks, must have tended very much to darken the picture, it was undoubtedly deep and full in tone from the first. Of this we shall find ample proof in the strictures with which the *Night Watch* was assailed on its first appearance. Vondel, contrasting the

"brightness" of Flinck's works with the mystery of Rembrandt's, to whom he covertly alludes, under the style of "Prince of Darkness," takes exception to the "artificial gloom, the shadows, and half-lights," which had invaded Dutch painting for some time past. Hoogstraaten's praises of his master's work, written in 1678, are chastened by regrets that "he did not put more light into the picture." A little later Houbraken declares that "when the passing infatuation of the public had subsided, true connoisseurs turned away from him, and light painting came into favour once more."

Just at this period the master's predilection for deep amber tones was becoming more and more marked. The first portraits he painted at Amsterdam are remarkable for their clear colouring, cool, silvery harmonies, and neutral shadows, inclining somewhat to green. But his tonality had become gradually richer. As his preoccupation with chiaroscuro increased, his shadows became not only more transparent, but warmer and more golden. Though nature was the invariable basis of all his creations, he claimed to interpret her from his own point of view, and through the medium of his own intensely personal genius. In painting the *Night Watch*, he probably put a certain constraint on himself. The harmonising of colours and the treatment of light were the main problems involved, and here he evidently hesitated to sacrifice the first to the last, as he would undoubtedly have done at a later period. He attempted to combine vigorous tonality with powerful chiaroscuro—a consummation very difficult of achievement. Hence the mixture of violence and timidity in this work, which betrays the tension of a mind not fully made up, and supported by no very definite conception. Unwearying in his quest of knowledge, in his desire for perfection, it was natural that there should be phases of temporary arrest, even of momentary retrogression, in the course on which he had been the first to venture. But his genius led him towards increasing freedom, till, happy in the new resources with which he had enriched his art, he took courage, and put forth all the strength of his originality. As has been aptly said, "shadow became his poetic vehicle," and if he did not, as Fromentin adds, exactly "make his day out of night," he may certainly be said to have

evolved it from shadows. Though he never absolutely abandoned contrasts of colour, he gradually inclined more and more to a monochromatic harmony, in which russets, warm browns, fawns, and golden tints predominated, and in this comparatively restricted scale he found gradations of infinite variety and delicacy.

In spite of the injuries wrought by time, and of the unfortunate proximity of certain pictures which detract from its effect in the Ryksmuseum, the *Night Watch*—though we shall not urge its claims to be entitled Rembrandt's masterpiece—is certainly one of his most interesting works, and one before which the student is most disposed to linger, attracted by that strange commingling of fact and poetry so stimulating alike to appreciation and to criticism. More forcible, indeed, than nature itself, Rembrandt has a light and life of his own, and when, after contemplating his work for a while, the eye wanders to the canvases around, they seem poor, meagre, inanimate, and as Samuel van Hoogstraaten remarked, "no better than the pictures in a pack of cards."

The *Night Watch*, therefore, holds a place apart in the history of corporation pictures, alike by virtue of originality of treatment and beauty of execution. The master's predecessors had been content with a convention absolutely insignificant from the picturesque standpoint; the natural method of arrangement seems never to have suggested itself to them. It was reserved for Rembrandt, in his first essay in this *genre*, to recognise the true conditions of such a class of pictures. As ten years before in the *Anatomy Lesson*, and twenty years later in the *Syndics of the Cloth Hall*, he now distanced all his rivals on their own ground. Like them, he had been content to express his meaning plainly, without the help of allegory; but he had brushed aside all the conventions in which they had been gradually entangled. Basing his work on the direct study of nature, he had brought the features he considered essentially characteristic into strong relief. His *Anatomy Lesson* was the glorification of Science itself; in his *Sortie of a Company of Amsterdam Musketeers* he embodied that civic heroism which had lately compassed Dutch independence; and in a group of five cloth-merchants seated round a table, discussing the affairs of their guild, he summed up,

as it were, in a few immortal types, the noble sincerity of Dutch portraiture. These three works themselves invite us to overstep the limits of actuality on which they were based; they speak to us of the ideal; they are not only landmarks in a great career, but evidences to that superiority over all his predecessors which we claim for the master—a superiority which becomes more conspicuous still if we look forward to those who succeeded him.



WOMAN IN A LARGE HOOD.

About 1642 (B. 359).



A LARGE LANDSCAPE, WITH A COTTAGE AND A DUTCH HAY-BARN.

1641 (B. 225).

CHAPTER XIV.

SASKIA'S LAST ILLNESS—HER WILL—HER DEATH—THE EFFECT PRODUCED BY 'THE NIGHT WATCH'—PICTURES OF THIS PERIOD: 'HOLY FAMILIES'—'BATHSHEBA,' 'THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY'—'PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH BAS'—ETCHINGS FROM 1643 TO 1645—LANDSCAPE STUDIES—'THE THREE TREES.'



PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT WITH
A FUR CAP AND LIGHT DRESS.

1630 (B. 24).

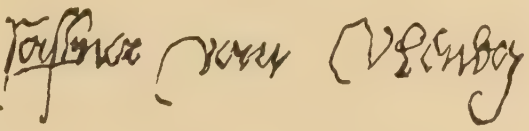
THE *Night Watch* was finished in the earlier part of 1642. The year before, the happiness of Rembrandt and his wife had been crowned by the birth of a son. He was baptised in the Zuider Kerk, September 22, 1641, by the name of Titus, in memory of Saskia's sister Titia, who died at Flushing on June 16 of the same year. Rembrandt's two brothers-in-law, Copal and Van Loo, were present at the christening, together with Aeltgen

Peters, Sylvius' widow. From this time forward Saskia's strength declined rapidly. We know from the etchings that in 1639 she had grown thin and ailing, and that her radiant expression had given place to an air of mournful foreboding. If we are to accept the testimony of the so-called *Portrait of Saskia*, dated 1641 in the Dresden Gallery (No. 1562 in the catalogue) she must have recovered for a while. The strongly illuminated face that confronts the spec-

tator in this portrait beams with health ; the cheeks are round and blooming, the expression gay and untroubled. But the resemblance to Saskia is far from striking—the figure is fuller, and apparently taller. If she really sat for this picture we must look upon it as one of those studies Rembrandt was fond of making from his relatives and intimates, in which he took little pains to preserve mere likeness. A something akin to Saskia in the features suggests that the sitter may have been one of her sisters. But be this as it may, the same model undoubtedly served for another portrait rather more minute in treatment, painted by Rembrandt some few years earlier, between 1635 and 1638. It represents a young woman putting the finishing touches to her toilet, and was lately purchased by Dr. Bredius, who at first took it to be a portrait of Saskia. The analogies between this and the Dresden picture are undeniable. I was struck by the likeness at first sight, and a careful comparison of photographs from the two subsequently confirmed my opinion. The shape of the face, the brow, nose, and mouth are identical ; and the eyes have the same soft, yet brilliant expression.

Less than a year after the birth of Titus, Saskia's illness had reached a stage at which illusions as to her recovery were no longer possible. Feeling herself to be growing gradually weaker, she begged that a notary might be brought to her bedside, and on June 5, 1642, at nine o'clock in the morning, "in full possession of all her faculties," she gave him her last instructions in the presence of two witnesses. Yet she herself had not lost all hope, for in the will she dictated she speaks of other children that might be born to her. This will bears testimony to the affection and perfect mutual confidence between Rembrandt and Saskia. By it she made Rembrandt her sole heir, on condition that he should give Titus a suitable education and training, and either establish him in some profession, or sufficiently provide for him at his majority. At Rembrandt's death, or in the event of his second marriage, her fortune was to pass to Titus. She further directed that should Rembrandt survive their son, one half of her property should revert to her sister Hiskia, in the event of his second marriage. But she stipulated that no legal security should be taken

for the carrying out of these provisions, having perfect confidence in her husband's honour, and "knowing that he would behave in the matter in exact obedience to his conscience."¹ As Titus's guardian he was to have the entire control of the property, for the disposition of which he was not to be called to account, and she begged the Chamber of Orphans to refrain from jurisdiction in the matter. At the end of this solemn deed, as if exhausted by the effort, she signed her name for the last time, in the tremulous, almost illegible characters here reproduced.

A few days later Saskia had passed away, and on June 19, Rembrandt, after following her coffin to the Oude Kerk, returned to the house in the Bree-

 straat, where everything

reminded him of his short-lived happiness, and where he now found himself alone with a child of nine months old. By July 9 he had made arrangements as to his wife's tomb, which resulted in his purchase of the spot where she lay. On December 17, 1642, after the proving of the will, the Chamber of Orphans authorised Rembrandt to take possession. In accordance with Saskia's directions, in which her cousin and representative, Hendrick van Uylenborch, fully concurred, no statement or inventory of any kind was demanded. This neglect on the part of Titus's natural protectors, together with the master's own unbusiness-like proclivities, brought countless difficulties upon him in after years. The feelings which influenced the relatives were natural enough, and may be explained both by their affection for Rembrandt and their reverence for Saskia's dying wishes. In the case of Hendrick van Uylenborch some personal consideration may have intervened. Hendrick, we know, was not only Rembrandt's friend, but his debtor. In a deed discovered by Dr. Bredius, dated 1640, he declares himself unable to repay a considerable sum of money advanced him by Rembrandt, Claes Moeyaert, and other artists, and offers as security

¹ Scheltema, *Rembrandt, Discours sur sa Vie*. 1866.

for the loan a mortgage on his pictures and other effects. Under these circumstances he was not in a position to be exacting in his relations with one who was his own creditor. But such laxity had the natural effect of encouraging Rembrandt in his distaste for business details. He was now left absolute control of the common fund, whereas, had he been required to furnish an inventory of the estate, he must have realised his own position; his son's rights would have been more clearly defined, and he would have been perhaps impelled to more careful administration of a fortune on which considerable inroads had already been made. Lacking these restraints, he gave way to his extravagant tendencies, and when, later on, it became necessary to give some approximate account of his financial position at the time of Saskia's death, he was obliged to resort to complicated inquiries and various costly proceedings.

The loss of a wife he had dearly loved was not Rembrandt's only trouble at this period. He saw that his popularity was on the wane. He, who had been the most fashionable and the most famous of Dutch painters, was beginning to experience neglect. His eccentric attitude towards the distinguished society who had received him so warmly at first had estranged many from him. The *Night Watch* was destined to deal a fatal blow to his reputation, and to sensibly diminish his *clientèle*. It is easy to understand the disastrous effect produced by this work. To begin with, his treatment of light was disconcerting in the extreme to the average Dutch mind—a mind pre-eminently sober and practical, which insisted on clarity and precision in all things. Secondly, those more immediately concerned in the matter naturally resented so audacious a divergence from traditional ideas. Rembrandt's work was not only a heresy in their eyes, it was little short of an impertinence. Relying on the orthodox precedents, each had paid for a good likeness of himself and a good place on the canvas. But the painter boldly ignored the terms of the tacit contract. The two officers prominent in the centre of the composition had, of course, nothing to complain of, and Banning Cocq himself seems to have been satisfied, or he would hardly have ordered the water-colour copy of the *Night Watch* already mentioned,

nor would it have been preserved as an heirloom. But the rank and file, with the exception of some four or five members, had come off very badly; and from their point of view these worthy folks had a distinct grievance against the master. Faces in deep shadow relieved by stray gleams of light, others scarcely visible, and others again so freely rendered as to be barely recognisable, were not at all to their taste. Disregarding what they conceived to be the established conditions of these portrait groups, the painter had sacrificed their personalities to æsthetic considerations. His first care had been to compose a picture. Knowing Rembrandt's character, we may imagine that he met their representations with a scanty respect, and so increased their resentment. As he could not be induced to alter the picture, his outraged models took refuge in the only consolation they had left. Failing their likenesses,



THE WIDOWER.

Pen drawing (Heseltine Collection).

they determined at least to preserve their names, and these were accordingly inscribed on a shield painted on the upper part of the canvas.¹ The careless treatment of the picture, and the mutilation to which it was subjected seem to show that Rembrandt's contemporaries long cherished their resentment against him. It was reserved for posterity to vindicate the master, and to

¹ This shield is somewhat later in style than the period at which the *Night Watch* was painted, and does not appear either in Lundens' copy or in Mr. de Graeff van Poelsbroeck's water-colour.

discount the passionate criticisms with which he was assailed in his life-time. But after such a blow to their vanity the civic guards bestowed their patronage elsewhere. They knew that artists more docile and pliable were plentiful enough, even among Rembrandt's own pupils. His commissions fell off gradually from this time forward. Adversity, far from softening his character, gave a misanthropic tinge to a disposition naturally somewhat morose. He had still a few faithful friends whose affection sustained him through his sufferings; but now, as ever, he found art his best consolation. ♪ For a time he had been utterly crushed by the overwhelming sorrow of his bereavement, but as he became calmer he turned eagerly to work, and sought refuge from solitude in occupation. Always sparing of speech, he found in art a silent but eloquent medium of expression. Though he produced fewer works between 1642 and 1645 than at any other time—the year 1644 in particular may be considered the least prolific of his life—yet we shall find, on enumerating the various works of this period, that their total is by no means inconsiderable. In the case of any other painter they would represent a very creditable activity, and it is only by comparison with Rembrandt's own extraordinary productiveness that they seem to fall short.

His thoughts turned naturally to the Scriptures. At this season of deep emotion he sought solace in his favourite book, and chose, among its countless episodes those best attuned to his frame of mind. We find the echo of his own melancholy in the themes he treats. The first is a *grisaille* of 1642, the *Descent from the Cross*, a subject which further inspired a slight etching of this year (B. 82), and several drawings (notably that in the Stockholm Print Room), in which the sentiment of the scene is more fully and pathetically expressed. The *grisaille*, which is in the National Gallery, has, unfortunately, darkened a good deal. Its effects of light and shade are very elaborately studied. The three crosses dominate the scene from the left; in the centre, surrounded by a crowd of indifferent spectators, a group of weeping women tend the Virgin, who sinks back in a swoon; across her knees lies the dead body of the Saviour, whose feet the kneeling Magdalene bathes with tears. Rembrandt's comprehension of grief such as this



Printed by Dreager & Lesieur, Paris

had become deeper and fuller than before. But his favourite themes at this period were those which recalled the happy days when Saskia was still with him. He had expressed his own joyful hopes in works such as the *Carpenter's Household*, the *Meeting of St. Elizabeth and the Virgin*, and *Manoah's Prayer*. In the *Holy Families* he painted at this period he gives utterance to his regrets. Mr. Boughton Knight's undated example, which figured in the Winter Exhibition of 1882, is probably the earliest of these. It seems to have been famous even in Rembrandt's own times, for several of his pupils made copies of it. During the last century it belonged to the Duke of Orleans, and was engraved in the series of reproductions from works in his collection, under the title of *The Cradle*. The handling is broad and free, but the colour has been very much darkened by the brown varnish overlying it. The scene is a Dutch interior; the Virgin watches by the cradle of the Infant Jesus; St. Anne is seated by her side reading a book, and a servant is engaged on some household task in the shadow beyond. The *Holy Family* in the Hermitage, an upright panel, signed, and dated 1645, introduces us to another humble home. The father, hatchet in hand, works at his daily task somewhat apart from the rest. The Virgin, who has been reading, has laid her book on her lap and gently draws aside the curtains of the little bed, displaying the sleeping Babe, fair and rosy in the warm, transparent shadow. A bevy of cherubs fluttering in a sunbeam above gaze admiringly at the tender scene. The composition has nothing of the sublime; such a picture, with its somewhat vulgar types, would be out of place over an altar. But we must remember that it was painted for a Dutch home, and its glorification of toil and maternity responded to the ideals of the age and nation. To quote M. P. Mantz: "Here Rembrandt cast off the trammels of the text, enlarging and modernising the theme. Even in painting a humble scene of everyday life such as this, he keeps the eternal truths of the spiritual life in view. In this masterpiece of tender expression every detail charms and touches—the sleeping child, the attitude and gesture of the mother, the sweet emotion of her gaze—the peaceful atmosphere of the scene in which the little drama—Dutch, yet universal—is enacted."¹ In the

¹ *Le Musée de l'Ermitage*; text by P. Mantz, p. 223. Ad. Braun and Company.

Cassel *Holy Family*, the latest of the three, which was painted the following year, the composition is suggested by a practice, then very general in Holland, of protecting valuable pictures from the dust by means of a curtain.¹ The scene represented by Rembrandt is supposed to be half concealed by the red drapery he has painted hanging from an iron rod. This is drawn aside to reveal a room, in which the Virgin is seated on a low chair, with the Infant Jesus in her arms. The Child caresses her face with both hands. His food is cooking on the embers beside them, and a cat sits demurely curled up on the hearth, expectant of her share. Beyond the group St. Joseph is seen at his work, and in the shadowy background, a bed, and the few utensils of the poor dwelling. Here we have none of the cheerful radiance of sunlight pouring in through open windows, and reflected from smiling landscapes beyond, which accentuated the joys of the *Carpenter's Household*. The room is full of deep shadows, and the mysterious glow which relieves the group of persons, as yet obscure, the dim reflections here and there, indicating rather than revealing details, seem, in some indefinable fashion, to suggest the sufferings and the glory in store for the family.

The Bible also furnished subjects for a pair of little pictures in the Berlin Museum, both signed, and dated 1645. The germ of one, the *Angel warning Joseph to flee into Egypt*, is recognisable in a very hasty, but superbly spirited sketch, also at Berlin (in the Print Room). The execution of the picture is somewhat coarse and careless; the Virgin's figure is barely outlined, and the Infant Jesus on the straw beside her is shapeless and clumsy. But the composition as a whole is not wanting in grace, and the angelic apparition, as he softly approaches Joseph, illumines the miserable shed in which the travellers have taken refuge. The pendant, *Tobit's Wife with the Kid*, of which there is a sketch in the Albertina, is a charming creation. It has deteriorated to a certain extent, unfortunately, like so many other works in the Crown collections of Prussia, which have suffered from the neglect with which they were treated in the royal residences, where they

¹ Other painters of the period, notably Jan Steen and Dou, used the same motive on several occasions.

formerly hung. But in spite of this, the limpid quality of the light, and the delicacy of the execution recall like characteristics in the *Philosophers* of the Louvre, save that the handling is freer in the Berlin picture.

Two more important compositions of this period were also inspired by the Scriptures : Baron de Steengracht's *Bathsheba*, at the Hague, signed, and dated 1643, and the *Woman taken in Adultery* of the



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO ST. JOSEPH.

Pen drawing (Berlin Print Room).

National Gallery, signed Rembrandt, and dated 1644. In the former, the master returns to the motive of the *Susanna* painted six years before. Bathsheba has just emerged from the bath ; sitting on an Eastern rug thrown over the edge of a raised terrace, she busies herself with her toilet. A golden ewer and basin are placed beside her. Her left hand is laid upon her breast, her right on the linen drapery across her legs. An old woman in a brown and violet dress, and a black hood with a gold embroidered veil, holds her right foot, and pares her nails.

An attendant behind her combs her long fair hair. The figure of Bathsheba, with its delicate features and graceful limbs, recalls Saskia, but the contours, their elegance fully displayed by the attitude, are slenderer and more refined than hers. In the background lofty buildings are set against a deep blue sky, and a flight of wide steps leads down to the bath. On a high terrace to the left, David, himself concealed from view, contemplates the scene. This picture, which is in first-rate condition, is remarkable for the vigour of its effect, and the skill with which the execution is adapted to the dimensions. It is also one of the works in which the master has been most successful in his rendering of the beauty of woman.

In the *Woman taken in Adultery* the handling is still more delicate and minute. There is a touch of affectation about the weeping sinner. She is evidently more overcome by the disgrace of discovery, than by sorrow for her fault. A Jew who leads her, rejoicing at the capture, shows her triumphantly to the Saviour. The spectator's attention is riveted at once on the noble and beautiful face of Christ, framed in long flowing hair. His mild gaze is fixed on the prisoner with an expression of mournful pity; those around look eagerly at Him, awaiting His words, moved by impulses the most diverse. Some are eager to entangle Him, or to lay the burden of decision on His shoulders; others, confident in His mercy, hope for pardon. The Temple, and the High Priest's throne, sparkling with gold and jewels, recall the background of the *Presentation* of 1631; but the transparent tones are warmer, the shadows deeper and more mysterious, and the colours more brilliant in the lights. In the principal group, the purple-reds mingled with gold are very harmoniously contrasted with the yellowish browns and dull blues in the armour and doublet of one of the guards.

The small number of portraits painted by Rembrandt at this period shows that he had to a certain extent lost favour with the public. On the other hand, we shall find that he produced a considerable number of studies from friends or models. We fail, however, to recognise Saskia in a picture dated 1643, which the Berlin Catalogue asserts to be her portrait, painted either from memory or from a

sketch made during her life-time.¹ Here again, the features seem to us coarser, the nose straighter, the mouth larger, and the type more robust than in the acknowledged portraits of Saskia. We are inclined to think that the face is more akin to that of the young woman in the Dresden Gallery, painted in 1641, which we have already had occasion to mention. But such vague likenesses are often deceptive. It will be safer to accept this work merely as a remarkably brilliant and broadly painted study. Others of the same class are the *Girl at a Window* in the Dulwich Gallery, and the graceful and pleasing study of a young girl in the black and scarlet uniform of the Amsterdam Municipal Orphanage. Both belong to the year 1645, the handling and the treatment of chiaroscuro being very characteristic of the master's manner at this period. The second example, which has slightly deteriorated, belonged till quite recently to the Princess Demidoff, who sold it in America in 1890. The *Woman Weighing Gold*, in the Dresden Gallery, is undoubtedly a work of Rembrandt's at this period, in spite of the clumsy forgery of the signature and the date 1643 on the upper part of the canvas. Though hardly one of his happiest inspirations, it is not unworthy of the master. The modelling lacks firmness here and there; but in the refined tonality, the delicacy and truth of the chiaroscuro, the skilful drawing of the hands, in the happy juxtaposition of the tones, kneaded, as it were, in the full impasto, we recognise some of Rembrandt's most characteristic qualities.

The so-called *Connétable de Bourbon* of 1644, is no doubt a portrait of some friend of the artist's. It was in the Secrétan collection, at the sale of which it was bought by Mr. Thieme, who lent it to the Exhibition of Old Masters held at Berlin in 1890. The powerful face is turned almost full to the spectator, and the strongly-marked features are set off by one of the fancy costumes dear to the artist—the black biretta, gold chain, and steel gorget worn by so many successive models. The gesture of the extended hand, the illumination of the figure, the masterly freedom of the treatment at once recall the figure of Banning Cocq in the *Night Watch*. The *Portrait*

¹ See No. 812 in the Berlin Catalogue.

of a *Young Savant* in Lord Cowper's collection at Panshanger is signed, and dated the same year, but Dr. Bode thinks it was probably executed a little later, an opinion he bases on the remarkable breadth of the execution. Dr. Bredius, for his part, inclines, to the belief that Nicolaes Maes was Rembrandt's collaborator in this firmly modelled and luminous picture of a young man with long brown hair, in the act of rising from his writing-table to take down a red cap from a hook on the wall. The *Portrait of J. Cornelis Sylvius*, formerly in the Fesch



THE HOG.
1643 (B. 157).

collection, where it was called a portrait of *Justus Lipsius*, and now the property of Mr. Carstanjen of Berlin, was painted seven years after the minister's death (it is dated 1645) probably for his widow, with whom, as we know, Rembrandt had always been on terms of affection. Sylvius, whose beard has become white, sits in an arm-chair, his

head turned slightly to the left. The severity of his black dress, over which he wears a velvet cloak trimmed with fur, accentuates the pallor of his long thin face.

Together with these portraits of friends, we may mention a number of studies made at this period from old men, picked up, no doubt, in the streets of the Jewish quarter. The *Rabbi* in the Berlin Museum, signed and dated 1645, is a rendering, vigorous to the verge of coarseness, of a model whose features both master and pupil reproduced in several works. Another old man is the subject of a study greatly superior to this both in execution and condition, to which the catalogue of the Hermitage collection formerly gave the misleading title of *Menasseh ben Israel*. The old man leans upon a stick, and makes a very imposing appearance in a plumed black

velvet cap, a red dress, and a fur-trimmed robe, fastened across the breast with a gold clasp. The sharply defined profile is strongly illuminated and stands out in frank relief against an architectural background of yellowish brown. We may further enumerate two studies of a white-bearded old man, with regular features, and great nobility of expression, painted about this period, one in Lord Scarsdale's collection at Kedleston Hall, the other in the Dresden



STUDY FROM NATURE (PIGS).

Pen drawing (M. Léon Bonnat).

Museum (No. 1571 in the catalogue). In the latter, the cloak and cap were unfortunately re-painted by De Pesne in the last century.

Rembrandt's portraits of old women generally show his powers at their greatest, and the fine example in the Hermitage, known as *Rembrandt's Mother*, fully bears out this assertion. I am at a loss to understand why the signature and the date 1643 upon it should have been called in question. Both seem to me obviously genuine. I am inclined, however, to reject the title. The type is certainly not that familiar to us in the master's youthful etchings and paintings.¹

¹ The model in this portrait of 1643 (a date confirmed by the handling) is, in fact, younger than Rembrandt's mother as she appears in the early works.

It is, however, a venerable face, and the expression is full of kindly shrewdness. Judging by the costume—a crimson velvet cape embroidered with gold, a dress of violet satin, opening over a finely pleated chemisette, a black mantle bordered with fur, and trimmed, like the bodice, with large gold ornaments—we should imagine it to be a study, rather than a portrait painted on commission. The hands, in one of which the old lady holds a silver-mounted eye-glass, are crossed over a book upon her lap; a small leathern pouch hangs on the wall beside her; her stick, a girdle, and a metal bowl are laid on a slab within reach. The whole is painted with extraordinary care and mastery, the touch—smooth and supple in the satins, rich and mellow in the velvets, sharp and brilliant in the gold and jewels—adapting itself to every variety of texture. Its extreme dexterity is most apparent, however, in the illusory rendering of the wrinkled skin, firm as yet, but about to wither.

Exquisite as is the technique in the portrait of Elizabeth Bas, bequeathed to the Ryksmuseum in 1880, by Mr. J. S. H. van de Pool, it is altogether lost sight of in the profound impression produced by the creation as a whole. By far the most remarkable portrait painted by Rembrandt at this period, it fairly claims to rank among his great masterpieces. Elizabeth Bas, widow of the Admiral J. Hendrick Swartenhout, belonged herself to a family of no great importance. But by her marriage with one of those heroic sailors who contributed so largely to the glory and prosperity of Holland, she had been admitted to the most distinguished society of Amsterdam. Thanks to a robust constitution, she retained the vigour and dignity so admirably rendered by the master to an advanced age. Born in 1571, she appears to have been from seventy-two to seventy-five years old when the portrait was painted. The character of the execution also points to the approximate date to which we think the portrait may be assigned, viz. 1643-1646. It is a three-quarters length of an old lady, seated, and facing the spectator. Her black dress is marked by the subdued elegance proper to her rank and age. A closely-fitting white cap with semi-circular ear-pieces surrounds the face, showing the roots of the hair in front, and the whiteness of the large gauffered



ruff is mitigated by the pronounced shadow cast by the head. In spite of her yellow complexion and parchment skin, the old lady's bearing is still erect and stately. On a table covered with a green cloth beside her, lies a large clasped book, doubtless a Bible. She seems to have just closed it, and to be meditating on what she has read. The small deep-set eyes twinkle keenly under the drooping lids, with an expression denoting a profound knowledge of life; the strongly-marked chin, the thin, compressed lips, proclaim a firm will and energetic character. The vigorous contours, sharply defined against the neutral background, the close, incisive drawing, the truth of the modelling, the decision of the accents, the extreme frankness of the intonations, even the choice of attitude, all combine to suggest the individuality of the sitter. These qualities in the painter's handiwork reflect her simplicity and uprightness, her good sense and moral vigour, the indefinable air of trenchant determination that characterised her. We see her to have been a woman, at once kindly and keen-sighted, whose confidence was not lightly bestowed, whose affections were deep, but discriminating. We imagine her to have combined with the orderly and economical instincts of her hereditary status, an innate dignity and nobility that enabled her to take her place as by right among the members of a patrician caste. Greatly as Rembrandt excelled in the rendering of those essential traits that character and habit stamp on a human face, he never gave more eloquent expression of his powers than in this masterpiece of sincerity and divination.

Contrary to his usual custom, the painter rarely took himself for his model at this period. The study of a head in the Dresden Gallery, dated 1643, and representing a young warrior with a long thin face, who wears the familiar steel gorget, and a small cap on his flowing hair, bears but a shadowy resemblance to Rembrandt. The insignificance of the type and a certain tameness in the execution seem to justify the doubts expressed by some critics as to its authenticity. The master is easily to be recognised, however, in a portrait at Buckingham Palace, a carefully finished work, in which he has painted himself in a red dress and black cloak, a cap on his head. Only the

first three figures of the date, 164-, are now legible. As Dr. Bode observes, Rembrandt has aged considerably, and his features are much altered since his last rendering of himself, the portrait of 1640, in the National Gallery. The signs of advancing age are still more apparent in the contemporary portrait at Carlsruhe, painted about 1645. The master was nearing his fortieth year; the lines in his face are deeper;



ABRAHAM WITH HIS SON ISAAC.

1645 (B. 34).

toil and sorrow have set their marks there. The persistent concentration of his gaze has deepened the furrow between the brows. The fires of passion and youthful pride have died out in the eyes; they have a sad and anxious expression. The moustache has disappeared, the hair is cropped and begins to grow scanty, falling away from the broad and noble brow, beneath which such a world of thought and imagination lies concealed.

The etchings of this period are comparatively

few and unimportant. They include several rapid sketches, scratched on the first plate that came to hand, such as the *Travelling Peasants* (B. 131), executed about 1643, a spirited study, in which the progression of the figures is very skilfully suggested. *The Hog* (B. 157), signed and dated 1643—we reproduce the study for this plate in M. Bonnat's collection—is a bucolic tragedy the master may often have seen enacted in the country. Bound, and laid on his side, the animal contemplates the preparations for his execution. He is fatted to a turn, and hope

is no longer possible ; his hour has come. Children crowd round him, rejoicing at the prospect of the approaching feast, with all the callousness of youth ; a peasant already sharpens the fatal knife. In 1644 we have only one work to record, *The Shepherd and his Family* (B. 220), a little composition hastily sketched on a plate containing several other studies. The shepherd stands beside his wife, who suckles her child on the bank of a stream, from which some goats are drinking. Several sacred subjects bear the date 1645, among



SIX'S BRIDGE.

1645 (B. 208).

them the *Abraham with his son Isaac* (B. 34), a plate remarkably simple and unloaded in workmanship, yet full of colour, owing to the masterly distribution of the shadows, and the vivacity with which differences of surface and texture are suggested by the handling. The *St. Peter* of 1645 (B. 96) failed in the biting, and the impressions are very faint. The same may be observed of a *Riposo* of the same year (B. 58), in which the Virgin is represented gently raising a veil that covers the Infant Jesus, to show Him to Joseph. The latter, seated beside her, turns from his meal to look at the sleeping Child ; a bird and his mate on the tree above them warble an accompaniment to the idyll. The *Philosopher Meditating* (B. 148),

an old man with his hands upon a book, is neither signed nor dated. Its analogies of execution with the foregoing are, however, so marked that it may safely be assigned to this period.

Such hasty works as these were Rembrandt's amusements, a record of fugitive impressions by a process he had completely mastered. His productiveness had been so incessant hitherto that he may well have felt a certain weariness at this juncture, and in spite of his philosophy, he had been greatly shaken by Saskia's death. It seems probable that the poor recluse felt that yearning for rest and refreshment which draws so many stricken souls to the fields and woods. Or it may be that Titus—who to judge by his portraits, was never robust—required country air. Whatever the cause, studies of landscape become very frequent in his *œuvre* from this time onward. Rembrandt had always loved natural scenery, as the numerous works by landscape painters included in his inventory attest. It was no doubt while still living in his native town that he bought sea pieces and views of the *dunes* by Jan Percellis, who was living in seclusion near Leyden, and by Percellis' brother-in-law, H. van Anthonissen, who sojourned for a time at Leyderdorp before settling in Amsterdam. Besides the works of these masters, he owned *grisailles* by Simon de Vlieger, views of the Tyrol by Roelandt Savery, landscapes by his friend Lievens, and by Govert Jansz, an artist of some note in his day, none of whose works have survived, and further, eight pictures by Hercules Seghers, whose originality and ingenuity in experiment influenced the master himself very considerably, as we shall find later. In Leyden itself, landscape painters such as Aernout Elzevier, Conraedt Schilperoort, the sometime master of Van Goyen, and Van Goyen himself, flourished during Rembrandt's youth. The last married at Leyden in 1618, and lived there till 1631, the year when Rembrandt removed to Amsterdam.

These men, together with Esaias van de Velde, Pieter Molyn, and Salomon van Ruysdael, were the pioneers of landscape-painting in Holland. Rembrandt had learnt to admire their novel methods amidst those very scenes in which some of them had been formed. His

own walks and studies in the neighbourhood of Leyden enabled him to appreciate their talent and their sincerity. His instinctive sympathies were with them, but, as we know, the course of his early development was largely determined by the teachings of Swanenburch and Lastman. He was able to find types for many of the personages in his Biblical scenes in the Jewish colony, among which he lived. But the landscape of his native country was altogether out of harmony with such episodes, and he felt he must look elsewhere for a setting. His anxiety to localise the scenes he loved to treat sent him to the works of his predecessors, the *Italianisers*, and from them he borrowed many of the picturesque details they had adapted from the landscapes of Italy. In his desire for accuracy, Rembrandt, who had never been out of Holland, relied on their pictures or engravings for the mountains, rocks, and buildings which seemed to him best suited to his respective subjects.

Thus his allegiance was divided between the two conflicting tendencies in Dutch art at that period. Loving truth, but venerating the traditions of "great art," so called, it was some time before his genius emancipated itself from the spells of legend, and gained the independence necessary to its full development. The struggle between the two influences, of which he himself was hardly conscious, perhaps, is nowhere so apparent as in his landscapes. With equal persistency and sincerity, he strove to reconcile the opposing forces of the national school, hesitating for a while to declare himself on either side. But from this time forth he recognised how infinite were the resources offered him by nature for the expression of his thought, and gradually landscape played a part more and more important in his works, as we notice in the *Rape of Proserpine* of the Berlin Museum, the *Susanna* of the Mauritshuis, the *Noli me Tangere* of Buckingham Palace, and the *Bathsheba* of the Steengracht collection. A small picture, painted about 1640, formerly in the Choiseul gallery, and now in the possession of Sir Robert Peel, attests the growing importance of the landscape in his compositions. The subject is *Moses discovered by Pharaoh's Daughter*, but the figures are hardly more than accessories. The princess and her attendants are almost lost in the deep shadows

overhanging the stream, on which the child floats in the ark of bulrushes. The vegetation, it is true, is not very carefully rendered. The innumerable commissions with which Rembrandt was overwhelmed on his arrival at Amsterdam left him little leisure to study nature in the surrounding country. Even in his pure landscapes of this period, convention takes the place of direct observation, and the painter's reliance on an accepted ideal is very apparent. Simplicity

is openly disregarded in these early essays, the complexity of which was well adapted to the prevailing taste.

In what strange country, we may not unreasonably wonder, did the painter study the scenery of his *Storm*, a landscape in the Brunswick Gallery, painted about 1640? The motives evidently belong to a land of dreams. The master has allowed imagination to run riot,



THE GROTTO.

1645 (B. 231).

treating his subject mainly as a pretext for those oppositions of light and shadow he loved to render. Heavy clouds rising from the right of the picture overcast the sky, and hang threateningly on the horizon. A watery light gleams on the walls of a town, across a stretch of fallow land, and on the tops of trees, quivering to the first gusts of the tempest. All around are watercourses pouring in torrents down the slopes, leaping in cascades from rock to rock, and dashing their foam into the air. Mountains which seem to set the laws of equilibrium at defiance, rise in chaotic masses one above the other throughout the rugged landscape. In such visions the recluse would seem to have sought indemnity for his sedentary habits. As he

painted he felt himself transported to the fantastic regions of his dreams ; the vast plains of Holland gave place to giant mountains, the vivid greens of her trees and pastures to warm yellows and russets. The *Mountainous Landscape* of Lady Wallace's collection, a work contemporary with the *Storm*, is hardly less peculiar. The contrasts are less violent, but that conflict between light and shadow, the mysterious poetry of which the master so often rendered, is again the



THE THREE TREES.

1643 (B. 212).

principal theme. In certain portions the warm brownish ground, which barely covers the panel, has been left, and gives the prevailing tone of colour, by which means an effect of perfect unity has been won. At a first glance the composition seems very simple ; but on closer examination the transparent depths of shadow reveal a mass of details unnoticed before. The perspective stretches away into infinity ; the planes develop before the spectator's eye. Streams of water pursue their various courses, intersecting each other here and there ; and in the landscape the eye gradually discovers a great diversity

of character and cultivation : fields, with the corn in sheaf; a town; a fortified castle, with moat and drawbridge; a village; a few scattered houses; clumps of trees; roads with passing carriages; and a man in a red cap, leaning on a stick, his servant beside him holding a couple of hounds in leash. In a large composition, dated 1638, in the Czartorisky Museum at Cracow, in its pendant, owned by Mr. von Rath at Budapest, and in several smaller works, such as the *Landscape at the Mouth of a River*, in the Oldenburg Museum, Lord Lansdowne's *Canal*, and a still smaller panel belonging to Lord Northbrook, we note the same contrasts of light and shadow, the same magical chiaroscuro, the same conglomerate of slightly incongruous elements. The combination of incoherence in the composition with precision in the treatment of light, of careful imitation with flights of pure fantasy, proclaim the conflict in Rembrandt's mind between opposing influences and the eagerness with which he strove to reconcile the visions that haunted him with the realities he loved.

Whether Rembrandt recognised his own shortcomings, or whether he had now more leisure for such studies, it is evident at least that he began to show an increasing sense of their fascination. In striking contrast with his painted landscapes, his drawings and etchings of this period deal with the simplest aspects of nature, and record the most naïve impressions. Audacious and complex as he showed himself in composition, in the presence of nature no motive was too humble for him. Beauties revealed themselves to him in the most modest themes, and he set himself to express them with the frankness of a child. Everything around him afforded subjects for study, and he was never without a note-book in which to jot down his passing impressions. His walks in the Amsterdam streets provided the material for countless sketches, swift records of characteristic features and effects, in which we recognise the canals of the city, their bridges, the houses along the quays the Montalban Tower, the ramparts, the shores of the Y, or perhaps some momentary effect of light, a stray sun-beam in some shadowy interior. Among the studies of this period, there are also several on which he has bestowed more time and labour. The fine drawing heightened with bistre in the Albertina, a view of

the Rokin with its rows of houses, was probably executed during the last years of Rembrandt's sojourn on the Binnen-Amstel, perhaps from his own window. In the background is the former Bourse, and in the foreground the sheet of water formed by the Amstel, dotted with boats, some moored, some in motion. Every detail adds to the impression of reality, the happy choice of motive, the correctness of the planes, the perfect truth of the values. His wanderings in the vicinity of the town were frequent and varied, and everywhere he found subjects for his pencil—now a strip of hedge, a wooden shed, a group of cottages among clustering trees; now a village in perspective, or the distant spires of Amsterdam above the horizon. The incisive firmness of these sketches is in curious contrast with the uncertain and faulty construction of his painted landscapes. The trees, however, betray an inexperienced hand; their outlines against the sky are rendered by a series of shapeless scribbles, the strokes of which have a wearisome monotony and regularity, as if drawn by rule. He shows greater facility in studies of tree trunks, and seems to have early perceived their æsthetic value in his compositions. In a drawing we borrow from the Duke of Devonshire's collection, probably executed about 1635, we note, side by side with trees the foliage of which is singularly tame and uniform in rendering, an old willow-stump introduced by the master in his etching, *St. Jerome* (1648, B. 103) and later in the *St. Francis* (1657, B. 107). It also figures to the left in the *View of Omval* (B. 209). He was encouraged in such studies by his perception of the great advantages to be derived from them in future pictures. Etchings made from such sketches, or drawn from nature on the copper, become more and more numerous, attesting both his delight in the work, and the rapid progress resulting therefrom.

The first pure landscape among Rembrandt's etchings, the *Landscape with a Cow*, dated 1634 (B. 206), is rejected by Mr. Middleton-Wake, though duly signed with the monogram used by the master at the period. I see no reason whatever, for my own part, to suspect the authenticity of the plate, which, though unimportant, is closely allied in execution to other etchings of the same date. Two undated

landscapes may perhaps be assigned to about 1640; one, the *Landscape with a House and a large Tree by it* (B. 207) is of little interest; the other, the *View of Amsterdam* (B. 210), is remarkable for its delicate workmanship, and for the skill with which Rembrandt has expressed the gradual reduction of the planes, conjuring up infinite space on a narrow strip of paper. I am once more at a loss



A WINTER SCENE.
1646 (Cassel Museum).

to imagine why Mr. Middleton-Wake contests the authenticity of the *Large Landscape with a Cottage and a Hay-barn* (B. 225), which is signed, and dated 1641, like the *Large Landscape, with a Mill-sail seen above a Cottage* (B. 226) with which its analogies are very marked, not only in choice of motive, but in treatment and dimensions.¹ The methods used to indicate distance—especially to the left of the first-named plate—and those employed in the foreground are

¹ The forms of the R and the b in the signature, and of the 4 in the date, are very characteristic, and are exactly reproduced on various other plates of the period, notably that of the *Man with a Crucifix and Chain* (B. 261), another work of 1641.

identical with those of the undisputed plate, and a like facility and knowledge of effect in each, seem to proclaim them fruits of the same stage of progress. The plate known as *Rembrandt's Mill* (B. 233), which is signed and dated like the above, is still more remarkable for the vigour of the drawing.¹ The absence of vegetation detracts somewhat from the interest; but the character of the crazy buildings



A VIEW OF OMVAL.

1645 (B. 209).

is indicated with extreme precision and firmness. It is hardly necessary to remark that the title rests on no sort of foundation, and is but another example of those arbitrary designations so often noted in these pages. The *Cottage with White Pales* (B. 232) is marked by the same sobriety of technique, but shows considerable progress in the treatment of foliage, and achieves an effect of great reality by very

¹ In composition it is, however, without the balance of a picture. Its reputation is perhaps by this time on the wane.—F. W.

simple means. But Rembrandt's claims to rank among the great masters of landscape were first made good in the famous piece known as the *Three Trees* (B. 212). In this impressive plate, every detail suggests conflict and struggle—the fitful gleams of light, the dense shadows that gather menacingly round them, the plain on which the waters are about to descend in floods, the trees, stretching out gnarled branches, stripped by the fury of the winds, the clouds that chase and meet each other in fierce encounter against a sky streaked by the first drops of the storm that bursts on the horizon. The bold contrasts and fiery execution well express this fierce aspect of nature, and a significant detail betrays the passion and impetuosity with which the work was carried out. Among the gathered clouds vague outlines of heads and limbs are distinguishable, survivals apparently of some earlier sketch which Rembrandt did not trouble himself to efface, in his eagerness to record the effect which appealed so strongly to his imagination.

From this time forth Rembrandt's slightest sketches bear the impress of his genius. In a few rapid strokes he conjures up some pregnant suggestion of nature's infinite diversities, with a suppleness and precision alike marvellous, seizing with infallible instinct the characteristic features of each image he presents to us. Three etchings of the year 1645, though inspired by very different motives, are marked by the same extraordinary truth of expression. One of these, *Six's Bridge* (B. 208), has, as its title proclaims, its legend, an invention probably, like so many others, of the last century. According to the tradition, Rembrandt executed the plate on the occasion of a visit to the Burgomaster Six at Hillegom, while waiting for the return of a servant, who had been despatched to the neighbouring village to fetch some mustard for breakfast. The rapidity of the execution no doubt gave colour to this absurd fable. But the etching, in any case, is evidently a study from nature, and with the simple means employed it would be impossible to give a more exact and characteristic rendering of a certain aspect of Dutch scenery. A plain stretches away in infinite perspective; a village is faintly indicated; the waters have risen to the level of the banks, and meander in scattered streams over the land; in the distance are sailing ships that seem to be

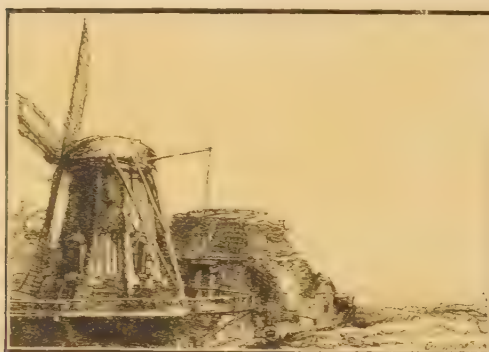
advancing upon the meadows. The execution, though hasty, is very decisive, and has a singular charm. In the *View of Omval* (B. 209), Rembrandt appears to have again used a plate on which he had already made a drawing. A young man, who places a wreath of flowers on the head of a young woman seated beside him in the shadow, appears to the left of the willow-stump already mentioned.¹ Working over the original sketch in part, Rembrandt incorporated it with the delicate background to the right, where he has introduced a village, supposed to be Omval, the houses, workshops, windmills, and boats of which are picturesquely disposed along the Amstel. The skilful blending of the two sections conceals the fact of their having been brought together by an afterthought, to disguise which the reeds, trefoils, and grasses, of the foreground have lent their aid. The third of the plates dated 1645, is that variously known as *The Watering-place*, *The Boat-house*, and *The Grotto* (B. 231). Here again we have a mass of vegetation clothing the steep banks of a watercourse, and Rembrandt's facile point has admirably suggested the luxuriant herbage of damp soil in this shady spot, where nature's grace and bounty are manifest in the minutest details.²

Rembrandt had now completed his apprenticeship in landscape art. From this time forth the contrast we have noted between the incoherence of his pictures and compositions in this *genre*, and the perfection of his drawings and sketches from nature, gradually disappears. A small panel in the Cassel Museum, a *Winter Scene*, signed, and dated 1646, has all the vivid and sudden quality of a sketch from nature, reproducing with absolute sincerity a simple motive, painted in a few minutes from a scene before the artist's eyes. The impression of the cold light of a winter afternoon, on a frozen canal where skaters disport themselves, is rendered with singular

¹ This plate is signed *Rembrant*, like the *Abraham with his son Isaac*, a work of the same year (1645).

² Dissenting from Bartsch and Charles Blane, Mr. Middleton-Wake holds that this plate exists only in one state, and that variations in the different impressions which those writers took to be proofs of a second state, are due simply to inequalities in the printing. But traces of the scraper, and of various re-touches, are very apparent in an impression of the second state in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

animation, and the little picture has all the spirit and actuality of the master's best etchings. Several studies of a like nature, which have unfortunately disappeared, are included in his inventory, and we have yet to mention a more important work, which combines the realism of this example with a higher imaginative quality. In such congenial studies Rembrandt found distraction from his griefs and disappointments, a renewal of his powers, and a further development of his genius. He still looked at nature with a poet's eyes, but the hand with which he interpreted her had acquired the facility, the assurance, and the technical accomplishment that proclaim a master.



REMBRANDT'S MILL

1641 (B. 233).

